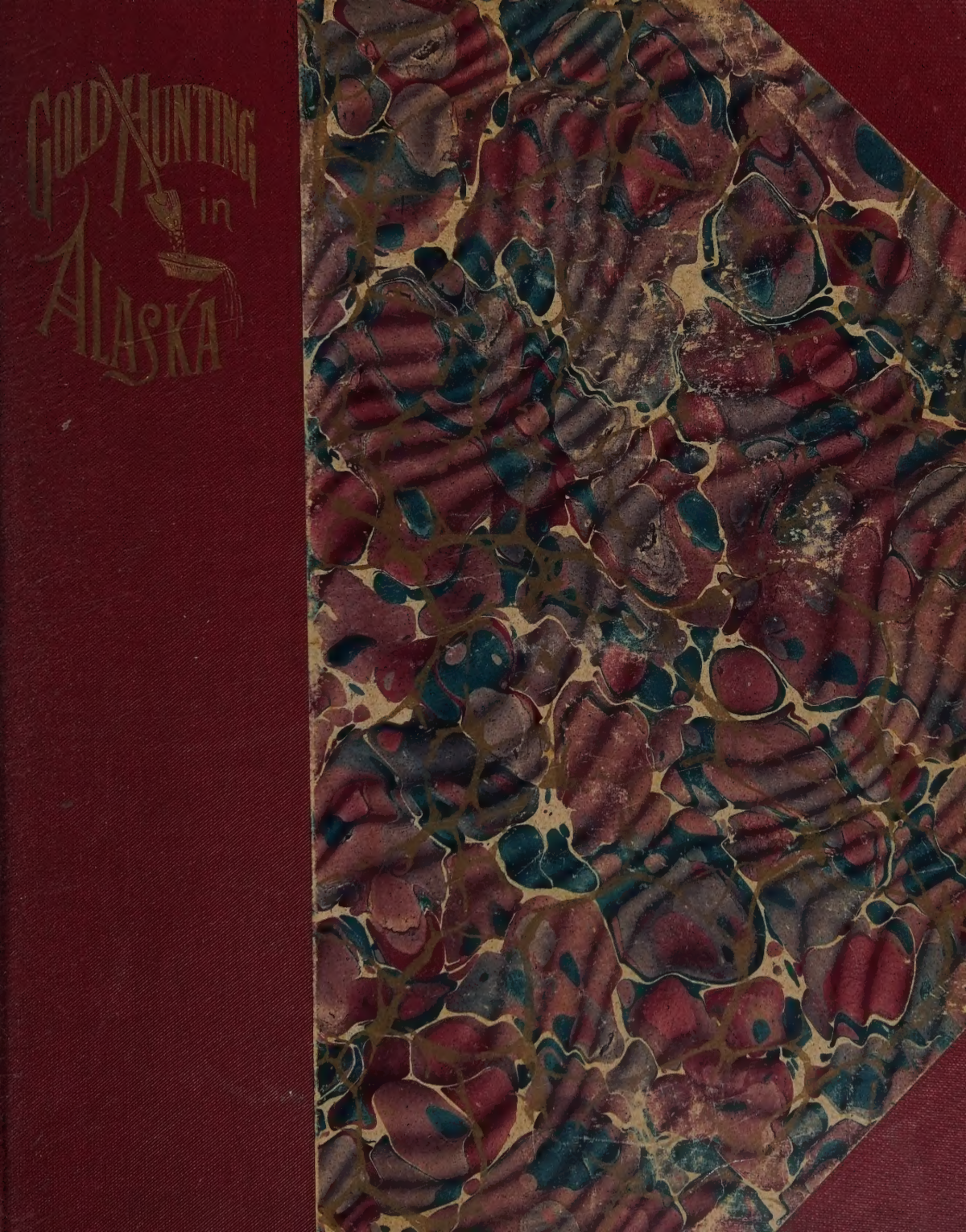
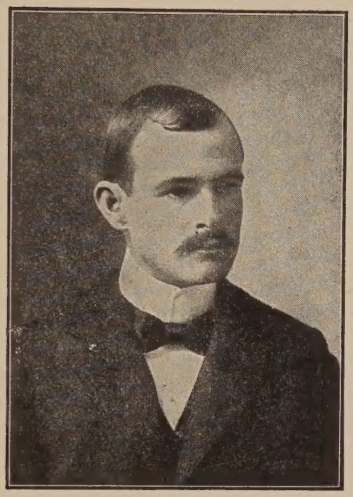

GOLD HUNTING
in
ALASKA

To Roy

From Mama

GOLD HUNTING IN ALASKA

AS TOLD BY



JOSEPH GRINNELL

EDITED BY ELIZABETH GRINNELL

Author of "How John and I Brought Up the Child," "John and I and the Church," "Our Feathered Friends," "For the Sake of a Name," etc.

Dedicated to disappointed gold-hunters the world over

DAVID C. COOK PUBLISHING COMPANY
ELGIN, ILL., AND
36 WASHINGTON STREET, CHICAGO

ALASKA.

The New World brings her daughter out
With fuss and bluster now;
Adorers seek her snow-white hand,
And at her beauty bow.
Each strives her favor first to gain,
And rudely steps upon her train.

They court her while they call her "cold"
And "distant" to her face;
The heiress smiles, while quick breaths lift
Her frills of ancient lace—
The eyes of all her suitors rest
On glint of gold upon her breast. —E. G.

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GOLD HUNTING IN ALASKA.

PREFACE.

The following story was originally written in pencil on any sort of paper at hand, and intended merely for "the folks at home." It is only by a prior claim to the manuscript that the young gold-hunter's mother has obtained his consent to publish it. The diary has been changed but little, nor has much been added to make it as it stands. The narrative is true from beginning to end, including the proper names of persons and vessels and mining companies. It is offered to the David C. Cook Publishing Company with no further apologies for its sometimes boyish style of construction. It will give the reader, be he man or boy, a hint as to how a young fellow may spend his time in the long Arctic winter, or in the whole year, even though he be a disappointed gold-hunter. It may afford suggestion to mining companies continually going to Alaska as to their responsibility to each other and to the natives of the "frozen North." It may give "the folks at home" some intimation as to possible "good times" under trying circumstances. Blue fingers may not necessarily denote a blue heart.

ELIZABETH GRINNELL.

Pasadena, Cal., Jan. 15, 1901.

CHAPTER I.

WE ARE a company of twenty men bound for Kotzebue Sound, Alaska. It is needless to say we are gold-hunters. In this year of our Lord 1898, men are flying northward like geese in the springtime. That not more than one of us has ever set eyes on a real, live nugget passes for nothing; we shall naturally recognize "the yellow" when we see it. It is our intention to ransack Mother Nature's storehouses, provided we can unlock or pry open the doors without losing our fingers by freezing.

Why we have selected Kotzebue Sound as the field of our maneuvers it would be difficult to give a rational reason. It may be nothing more nor less than the universal rush to the gold fields of Alaska, which rush, being infectious, attacks all grades and conditions of men. That all grades and conditions are represented in our company will be demonstrated later on, I believe.

The instigator of the Long Beach and Alaska Mining and Trading Company is an undertaker by trade, a sometime preacher by profession and practice when not otherwise engaged. His character is not at all in keeping with his trade; he is a rollicking fellow and given to much mirth.

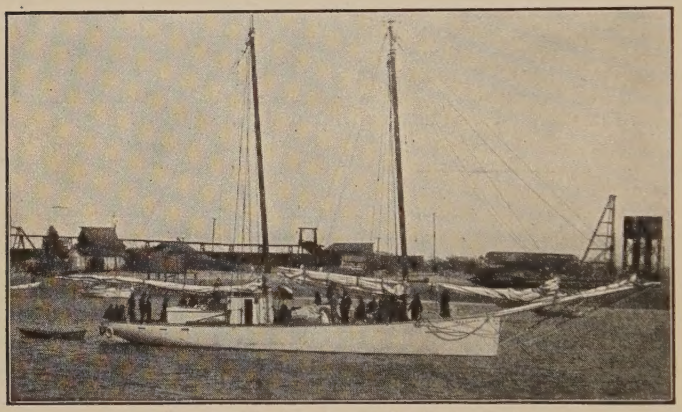
We have also a doctor, as protection against contingencies. His name is Coffin. He and the undertaker have been bosom friends for years. The combined influences of these are sufficient to insure proper termination to our trip, if not a propitious journey. The eldest of our company is rising fifty, the youngest twenty-one. The oldest has lived long enough to be convinced that gold is the key that unlocks all earthly treasures; his sole object is the key hidden somewhere in the pockets of the great Arctic. The youngest cares little for the gold, being more concerned about certain rare birds which may cross his devious path. The most of us have never met before, but are now an incorporated mining company, like hundreds of ship's crews this year. Each intends to do his share of work and to claim his portion of the profits, if profits come.

We have a two years' outfit of every comfort possible to store away on a little schooner seventy-two by eighteen feet. Her name is "Penelope;" you can read it in plain type half a mile away. She was built for Japan waters and has never set keel in Arctic seas. There are numerous prophecies concerning her: "She will never reach her destination;" "Impossible that she is built for a stormy coast;" "You may as well make your wills before you embark." And many other cheering benedictions are tossed to the deck by friends on shore who watch us loading the freight into her hold.

We make no retort. Of what would be the use? Our hearts, our hopes, ourselves, are

on board of her for better or for worse. We wave our handkerchiefs in a last "good-by." They are the only white handkerchiefs in our possession, brought and shaken out to the winds for this very purpose. From henceforth the bandana reigns on occasions when any is required. Old Glory floats above us; the "Penelope" is bright with new paint and trimmings and masts; she is towed out of San Pedro Harbor, and heads for San Francisco for more supplies.

Out of San Pedro Harbor! The very same of which R. H. Dana wrote in 1840 as a "most desolate looking place," frequented by coyotes and Indians, but "altogether the best harbor on all the coast."



"Penelope" at Anchor in San Pedro Harbor.

We have a copy of his "Two Years Before the Mast" on board, and shall be complimented by what he says about the Englishmen and Americans whom he met. "If the California fever (laziness) spares the first generation, it always attacks the second." Did Dana mean the crew of the "Penelope"? We shall see.

Having made a dutiful promise to my mother to "keep a faithful diary" of our cruise, which, in event of disaster, shall be duly corked in a large bottle and sent adrift, I now enter my first date since April 8, 1898, the day on which we set sail from San Pedro, California.

North Pacific Ocean, June 5.—We are seventeen days out from San Francisco, and have made a little over twelve hundred miles; that is, in a direct line on our course to Unamak Pass through the Aleutian Islands, for we have had many unfavorable winds against which we were compelled to tack. We have sailed two thousand miles, counting full distance. We have experienced two storms which, put together, as the captain says, makes "a good half a gale." While the "Penelope" rides the highest billows like a duck, at times she pitches and rolls in a terrific fashion. Her movements are short and jerky, unlike those of a steamer or larger vessel. When the wind blows hard on her quarter, the rail is often under water. This makes locomotion difficult, especially if the waves are rolling high, and everything is bouncing about on deck. It is my duty to carry "grub" from the galley to the cabins, and I can never handle more than one thing at a time, as I am obliged to keep one hand free. I wait for my opportunity, else a heavy sea starts at the same time and we go down together, "grub" and all. However, I have had few accidents. Once I landed a big platter of mush upside down on the deck, and at another time a gust of wind took all the biscuits overboard, while a big sea filled the milk pitcher with salt water. This was not so bad as Dana's experience with the "scouse," which "precious stuff" came down all over him at the bottom of the hatchway. "Whatever your feelings may be, you must make a joke of everything at sea," he wrote just after he had found himself lying at full length on the slippery deck with his tea-pot empty and sliding to the far side. We are better off than the crew of the "Pilgrim" in 1840, for there is plenty more, if half the breakfast goes to feed the fishes.

Down in the cabin there is the most fun. The table is bordered by a deep rail, and several slats are fastened crosswise over the surface to hold the dishes, besides holes and racks for cups; yet when things are inclined at an angle of thirty-five degrees it is almost impossible, without somebody's hand on

each separate dish, to keep the meal in sight. We have some trouble in cooking at times, but the stove has an iron frame with cross pieces on top to keep the kettles from sliding, which, in rough weather, can never be filled more than half. We usually get up very good meals; that is, for such of the crew as have an appetite. For breakfast, rolled oats mush, baking-powder biscuit, boiled eggs or potatoes, and ham. For dinner, light bread or milk toast, beans or canned corn, salt-horse, creamed potatoes, and often soup with crackers. For supper, canned fruit, muffins or corn bread, boiled ham and baked potatoes. Of course tea or coffee with each meal. The cook makes fine yeast bread, ten loaves a day. There are twenty-three men on board, including the hired sailors who are not of the company, and even with five in the hospital we make way with a good deal of food.

Our fare differs somewhat from that of the crew of the "Pilgrim," whose regular diet, Dana wrote, was "salt beef and biscuit," with "an occasional potato." But it must be remembered that we had several articles, such as eggs and ham and fresh potatoes, the first days of our cruise, which we never saw later on when we were confined to bacon and beans for staple supplies, with dessicated vegetables and some canned goods for extras.

We left San Francisco May 19, after taking on board the parts of a river boat, to be put together when needed, and much more Arctic clothing than we can possibly use in two or even four years. The sea was very rough. Our captain had not been on board ship for two years, and the result was that he, with every one of the party except the sailors, was very sea-sick. The doctor was pretty well in a couple of days, but the undertaker fared not so well. He stayed on deck and sang and jumped about and did his best to keep jolly as long as nature could hold out. Presently one could tell that he was feeling rather uneasy about something, when all of a sudden quietness reigned and only an ominous sound from over the rail gave indication of what was passing.

We have some fine singing. "The "Penelope Quartette" has been formed and practices every evening, making voluminous noise, but there is no fear of disturbing adjoining meetings or concerts. The quartette is composed of Reynolds (the undertaker), Foote, Wilson and Miller. There are other singers of less renown. We have a "yell," which is frequently to be heard, especially at getting-up time in the morning. It is "Penelope, Penelope, zip, boom, ah! Going up to Kotzebue! rah! rah! rah!"

We are very much crowded and have many discomforts, as anyone can imagine we should have in so close quarters; but we are a congenial crowd. I was sea-sick for a week, but am all right now and capable of eating more than anyone else, a symptom which the doctor fears may continue, as I make it a rule to eat up all there is left at both tables. There are eleven men in the after cabin and twelve in the forward cabin, including the forecastle, and each set have meals served in their respective cabins. Having been chosen as "cook's assistant," I have ample opportunities.

We have seen but few things of interest outside the boat, and that makes us more interesting to one another. We have sighted no vessels for two weeks. I saw two fur seals. They stuck their heads above the water just behind us, eying us curiously for a few minutes, and then vanished. We have seen one shark, but no whales. Petrels, or Mother Cary's Chickens, are almost always to be seen flitting over the waves. Black-footed albatrosses, or "goonies," as the sailors call them, are common, following the boat and eating all kinds of scraps thrown to them. We caught two with a fish-hook, but let them go, as there is now no suitable place to put the skins. One of the albatrosses measured seven feet three inches from tip to tip of the outstretched wings. We fastened upon his back a piece of canvas, giving the "Penelope," with the date and longitude and latitude. I wonder if he will ever be seen again, and, if seen, if this will be the only news of us the world will ever receive!

There are several "goonies" which seem to follow us constantly. We have named them Jim, Tom and Hannah. They know when meal time arrives, and then come close alongside within a few feet.

Tuesday, June 7.—The past two days have been stormy, but we have made good time and are only four hundred and sixty-seven miles from Unamak Pass. We saw several pieces of kelp this morning, which gives evidence of land not far off. This morning the sun came out several times, and every one is feeling quite jolly, which makes even the sea-sick ones better. One of the most popular songs on deck these cloudy days has been the familiar one, "Let a little sunshine in." Everyone was singing it to-day, when

Cooks' Union.

suddenly the clouds broke as if by impulse and the warm sunshine flooded the damp decks.

The sun doesn't set now till nearly nine o'clock, and the whole night long it is scarcely dark at all.

To-day Clyde took the pictures of the party in groups, or "unions." There is the "Sailors' Union" (six of the boys besides the regular sailors, who go to the watch along with them and take their tricks at the wheel), the "Dish-washers' Union," the "Doctors' Union" (Dr. Coffin, and Jett, who is a druggist), the "Cooks' Union" (Shafer and myself), and the "Crips' Union" (the cripples, or those who are sea-sick, and do no work; they are Fancher, Wyse, McCollough, Wilson, Reynolds and Shaul). If the winds are favorable we expect to rest in Dutch Harbor for a few days, as we are no doubt too early to get into Kotzebue. From all accounts we cannot hope to reach the Sound until July 14.

Sailors' Union.

This sort of experience is so new to me. I thought I knew something of life on a schooner, during the trip to San Clemente and San Nicholas last year, but this is more and better. Nearly everyone save myself is longing for land, and they watch our course each day as it is traced on the chart with more interest than anything else. Just now I am sitting alone on a bench in the little galley, watching the potatoes and salt-horse boiling. The sun has come out and everyone is on deck, the "crips" lying against the stern rail or along the side of the cabin. By orders of the doctor all the bedding is airing on the deck and rails amidships, and some of the boys are taking advantage of the fair weather to do their washing. I did my own yesterday, although it was raining, and, as I have a "pull" with the cook, I dried the clothes in the galley at night. Of course all washing has to be done in salt water and it is scarcely satisfactory, to say the least. This necessary laundry work of ours is destined to occupy a good deal of our time and patience, and I suspect that before our cruise is over we shall long for a glimpse of a good, faithful washerwoman with her suds, and her arms akimbo, and her open smile.

June 12.—We are in Bering Sea and all's well. It is partly clear, but cold, with a sharp wind. We went through Unamak Pass in the night. The captain thought it dangerous as well as delaying, to stop at Dutch Harbor, so we gave it up with disappointment. After beating for several hours, we are now well on our way straight northward to St. Lawrence Island. There is no ice in sight, but we can smell it distinctly. As we went through the Pass it was raining, and we could see but indistinctly the precipitous shores. The Pass is not usually taken by sailing vessels, as it is quite narrow, but our captain brought us through all right in spite of fog and storm. He has not slept for forty-eight hours. The shortest time ever made by a sailing vessel from San Francisco to Unamak Pass, 2,100 miles, was eighteen days; and we made it with the "Penelope" in twenty-three days. Hurrah for the "Penelope"!

Dishwashers' Union.

This morning we passed within hailing distance of the ship "Sintram," of San Francisco. She had taken a cargo to St. Michaels and was on her way back. Her captain promised to report us, and he also told us that the ice was yet packed north of St. Michaels and that several ships were waiting. Clyde took a snap shot of the "Sintram."

There are plenty of birds to be seen now. If I had faith enough to warrant my walking on the water I would go shooting. Our small boats are all lashed

Crips' Union.

to the deck of the "Penelope," but the captain says that in a few days we can put a skiff overboard if it is calm, and then ho! for murre pot-pie! Everyone is hungry for

A Sunbath on Deck.

fresh meat. We try fishing with no luck. Saw a fur seal to-day, the first in two weeks.

June 19, Bering Sea, latitude 63 degrees, longitude 172 degrees, 38 minutes.—For the past few days we made good time, one hundred miles to the day, but on this date we are becalmed. Clyde has gone out in the boat to catch a snap shot of us. He need not hurry, for never was mouse more still than the "Penelope" at this moment. The thermometer registers 38 degrees on deck. We have sighted no ice yet, and hope the Bering Straits are open.

I am sitting in the galley, as my fingers get too cold to write outside. We have just cleared off supper, and the boys are pacing the deck for exercise. Some of them are below, where an oil stove in each cabin takes the chill and dampness from the air. It is seldom that the galley is not crammed full, but just now the cook and the others have gone below for a game of whist, so I embrace the opportunity to write. My diary is always written after I have finished my daily bird notes, which I make as copious as possible. I have some good records already. We were becalmed three days in sight of the Prybiloff Islands, and at one time were so close to St. Paul Island that we could hear the barking of thousands of seals, and, by the aid of a field glass, could see them on the beaches. A few were seen about the "Penelope," and one came so near to the boat that it was touched with an oar. We unlashed the smallest boat and rowed out with her during the calmest days, so we had some much-needed exercise. Frequent fogs kept us near the "Penelope's" side, as we should easily become lost. We saw no ducks or geese, but we had murres in plenty and pot-pie for several days. For a change they were served up in roasts, being first boiled, and were finer than any duck I have tasted, though some of the squeamish crew composing the "Crips' Union" declared they were "fishy."

Of course I improve every opportunity during pleasant days to collect, and the result is thirteen first-class bird skins. These sea birds are almost all fat and the grease clings to and grows into the skin so firmly that it is almost impossible to put them up. Among the good things which I have secured are the crested auklet, red phalarope, pallas. murre and horned puffin, but it will be difficult to preserve the skins in this damp climate. Dr. Coffin is becoming interested already, and talks of putting in his spare time collecting with me. He has been taking lessons in skinning, and so far has put up two specimens. We have rigged up a cracker-box for our bird-skins and try to keep it in the dryest place, though it is so

Speaking the "Sintram."

crowded on shipboard that a convenient place for any particular thing is scarce.

The currents in Bering Sea are quite strong, tending northward toward the straits, so that even when the wind fails

us we are drifting towards our destination at the rate of fifteen to twenty miles a day. On board we are all happy and in good spirits, notwithstanding the fact that some have never before known a hardship, and their eight hours watch per day on deck, especially when it is stormy, is calculated to make them think longingly of their pleasant homes. Besides, many of the boys have salt water sores on their hands and chilblains on their feet.

Yesterday the sea was choppy and several were sea-sick again. Even I felt that peculiar indescribable sensation, but I ate a hearty dinner of beans and salt pork and felt better. C. C. is suffering from what he declares is "indigestion" a weakness to which he has always been subject. He feels a reluctance to owning that he has the common ailment. "C. C." is our abbreviation for Reynolds, the undertaker and sometime preacher. He makes so much fun for other people that we cannot help amusing ourselves at his expense sometimes.

Becalmed in Bering Sea.

We passed St. Matthew Island and caught a glimpse of its rugged shores through the thick fog. We can generally tell the proximity of land by the increased number of sea-birds. It is not often that the sun appears now, but occasionally it shows itself long enough for the captain to take his observations. It is light all night and seems like a dream of childhood to have to go to bed before the lamps are lighted.

I must pay a compliment to our captain. Besides knowing his business thoroughly, he is a jolly, agreeable man, always cutting jokes except during a storm. He has been created the "Penelope's" laureate, and has written a couple of poems that would make good his rank anywhere.

There was one day when we all had an attack of the poetic fever and wrote verses. They will be found in the ship's log.

To-day is Sunday, and as usual we all attended services, which consist of songs and a short talk from C. C. The rest of the day is like any other.

Last night an exhausted sandpiper flew on board and was caught. I was asleep and the boys came and laid it on my breast. He is now safely wrapped in cotton wadding and laid to rest in the aforementioned cracker-box. The boys declared they would whip me for not letting him go, and yet when they get a chance they shoot at birds from the boat for "sport," with no other purpose in view. I am doing my best to educate them in bird lore, but whenever I get off the long Latin names they give me the "ha-ha." By this time and after many lessons the most of them know a murre by sight, and a fork-tailed petrel, and a kittiwake; but when it comes to distinguishing the different species of auklets at a distance they think I am fooling them, and laugh at me until I show them the bird at close range. I never realized before the vastness of the sea as when a solitary little bird dips his wings and flies skyward.

CHAPTER II.

JUNE 1.—Yesterday the fog cleared and disclosed to us the snowy peaks of the Siberian coast far to the northwest, and in front to the north of us the long coast line of St. Lawrence Island. We headed for the west end of the island, intending to pass up the channel between it and the Siberian coast. Saw two vessels in the distance returning from that direction. After we had beat against a bad wind all day we found ourselves almost surrounded by icebergs. With the field glass we could see the whole horizon a solid mass of ice. Our way was blocked. Turning eastward, we tried the passage between St. Lawrence Island and the Alaskan coast. The wind was blowing bitterly cold from the Siberian shore. Beating eastward along the south side of the island, we have now left the ice behind. This afternoon a two-masted schooner spoke us on her way to try the passage we had just abandoned. She turned and sailed with us. She carried a pretty tough-looking crowd of miners. They, like ourselves, are bound for Kotzebue. We gave them the "Penelope" yell, which they returned with three cheers. In sizing up their piratical appearance we forgot to look in the glass.

June 25.—Seventy-five miles southeast of Bering Strait. The Alaskan mainland north of Norton Sound in plain view. Have spent five days trying to get around St. Lawrence. Are still in sight of the east end. It is calm.

We need more wind. Entered Bering Sea two weeks ago, and the days have been like a yachting cruise. Everyone is in good spirits. Several of the boys are witty and jokes fly. And the singing!—we exhaust the

Sighting a Vessel.

words we know and then make up as we go along, like plantation negroes. Are playing several tournaments in games. Only one so far has been concluded—the domino game. Dr. Coffin and Jett were the unlucky ones, and last night they entertained the crowd. Captain was master of ceremonies and dressed in a most ludicrous manner. He made a mock speech and read a poem. The two unlucky victims were treated to burnt cork and wore great Eskimo muckluks (sealskin boots), murre-skin hats, and red calico decorations. Doctor beat the big tin washpan and Jett blew the foghorn. The captain's wand was a boat-hook with a shining red onion on the tip and bearing a red pasteboard banner with the motto, "On to Kotzebue." They were to march fifty times around the deck. Casey, our Irishman, was appointed policeman by the captain "to keep the small boys and the carriages off the street." And so, to the tune of the foghorn and the dishpan, they tramped their penalty. Then the captain gave an exhibition of clog dancing, with a fife and harmonica accompaniment. So one can see there is always something going on to break the monotony and keep the blues away. We suffer little from dull times. Whales are now as common as seals. One we saw looked as large as the "Penelope." Clyde took its picture. I got out our Winchester to-day. Am on the lookout for polar bears, which are expected to frequent the ice packs. The cook has just yelled "Supper!" and everyone is singing "Beulah Land."

Arctic Ocean, July 7.—The next morning after my last date we sailed to within a mile of King's Island. This is a precipitous point of rock scarcely a mile in diameter, and yet more than two hundred Indians live upon it. Before we were within three miles of the island the natives began to come alongside of the "Penelope" in their skin canoes, or kyaks, wanting to trade. These were the first natives we had seen, and our interest in them was unbounded. Fully fifteen canoes, some singly, but mostly lashed together in pairs, reached us, and their occupants came on board with their sealskin bags full of articles to trade. They had a large quantity of walrus tusks, some of large size, weighing probably ten pounds, and very valuable. There were polar bear skins and fox skins beautifully tanned, also sealskin coats and muckluks (skin boots).

They wanted in exchange clothes, flour, tobacco, knives, etc., and, if we had prepared ourselves, we could have obtained many valuable things. Most of us saved what things we had to trade with later on.

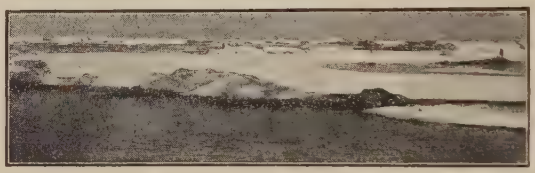
Beyond King's Island our way was again blocked with ice. We then turned east towards Port Clarence, but in a couple of hours encountered the ice pack extending

Natives of King's Island Coming to Trade.

out full twenty miles from the Alaskan shore. We thought our way was blocked, but the captain thought we could keep along the shore ice, and did so, the passage opening as we advanced. After skirting the ice all day we entered the straits at midnight

June 26, and found ourselves between the Diomede Islands and Cape Prince of Wales. Everyone was on deck enjoying the scene until 2 a. m. The sun loitered along the horizon four hours and at midnight barely disappeared. The clouds and water were gorgeously tinted in the manner so often described by Arctic travelers. No words can do the scene justice. To the right rose the mountains of Alaska, extending far back from Cape Prince of Wales, the shores broken by their blue-tinted ice pack. Dark blue shadows stood the mountains out in beautiful distinctness. On our left were the precipitous Diomede Islands and Fairway Rock, with the snowy mountains of the Siberian shore rising further in the distance.

Ahead, our progress would soon be stopped by the long line of ice extending under the Arctic horizon, where the sun was vainly endeavoring to set. Just at midnight a spot of blazing light appeared at Cape Prince of Wales, fully eight miles away. It was the reflection of the fiery red sun on the window of the mission which has been established at that point. These shores are not inviting, and yet we know that here on this bleak coast are living, the whole year through, American missionaries, whose purpose is as eternal as the icebergs.



Nearing the Great Ice Pack.

Everyone was happy and exerting himself to express what he felt. Some yelled wildly, and, taking off their shoes and stockings, threw them into the ocean. Others sang with might and main. "Beulah Land" and "Nearer, My God, to Thee" were followed by "Yankee Doodle" and "My Country, 'tis of Thee," with everybody dancing and running about like a lot of Indians. "Penelope, Penelope, zip, boom, bah! Going up to Kotzebue, rah! rah! rah!" was yelled till all were hoarse. Finally, about 3 p. m., we began to quiet down for a little sleep.

In the night a small schooner like our own, the "Acret," caught up with us, having found the passage we had followed. We passed through scattering ice and sailed about fifteen miles beyond the straits, but here were confronted by the solid ice pack of the Arctic which extended on all sides. After sailing about in circles in this limited area of water all day, the "Acret" was seen to be heading through a break in the shore side of the ice, and we followed. Both boats dropped anchor about a mile from the Alaskan shore in shallow water, where the ice had left a clean anchorage. The "Acret" and "Penelope" were so far the first boats to pass through the straits.

We were all eager to land. As soon as the dinky was overboard, five of the boys, with little thought for anyone else, as was quite natural under the circumstances, jumped in and moved for shore. And what was exasperating beyond description to us who were obliged to wait our turn, they did not bring the boat back for two hours. We have forgiven them, but they'll have to pay for it.

At 6 p. m., Dr. Coffin and I, and others, landed and started on our first tramp. Our feet were for the first time on Alaskan soil. But we saw none of the soil. Moss everywhere, and flowers and wild strawberries. It was a queer sensation to set one's feet down on what looked like substantial ground and sink a few inches to solid ice, crushing the flowers beneath.

I was all eyes and ears for what new birds might cross my path. Almost the first thing a flock of Emperor geese flew past me and were out of range. These are the rarest geese in North America and found only in Alaska. I saw but one land bird, a species of sparrow, but there were large numbers of water birds. I obtained some rare eggs, such as phalarope, western sandpiper, etc. A snowy owl was flushed, the first I ever saw alive, and it was at once mobbed by a dozen Arctic terns which had their nests near by. The land here is low and rolling, with little knolls and lakes. The ground in places was thawed about a foot—that is, taking the depth from the top of the spongy moss. On the dryer knolls several kinds of flowers were blooming and the grass was luxuriant in places. I searched for insects, but found only two bumblebees, which I could not catch, having no net with me.

We stayed on shore until midnight, tramping over the tundra and collecting birds and eggs. At 1 a. m. rowed back to the schooner. A canoe load of Indians had come alongside, and they had one Emperor goose. I coveted it. Tried to trade for it, offering several

articles, but failed to offer the right thing. Afterwards one of the "Acret" men obtained it for an old tin tomato can. The "Acret" fellows had also been on shore and succeeded in shooting another goose, so they now had a pair of them, which they allowed me to have for the skinning, provided I returned the bodies in time for breakfast. I was happy. I immediately went to work, having the usual experience in skinning sea birds with the enormous amount of fat which must be peeled, rubbed, scraped and picked off. It took me until three o'clock in the morning, and I was then glad to crawl into my bunk for a little sleep. By night the next day the water seemed almost clear of ice, so we heaved anchor and started northeast along the shore towards Kotzebue. Soon came to the ice again, scattered and in blocks. Keeping right on between the blocks, we came to a big, fatherly iceberg which had run aground. The water here was very shallow, and we had to be careful not to run aground ourselves. The "Penelope" draws eleven feet of water, and a mile from shore it is often scarcely three fathoms, and of course shallower towards shore.

Anchored to a Grounded Iceberg.

It was very exciting sometimes when the ice blocks became too thick. And they choked and moaned and snored and heaved against each other in a fit of passion, and challenged one another to "come on," and ground their teeth in rage, and swished calmly, and chuck-a-lucked through the water. It was a grand sight to remember.

At times several of the boys had to take poles—driftwood which we had taken possession of for just such an emergency — and, standing at the bow, push off the ice. Even then several of the larger blocks got the better of us and would stop our progress by a sturdy crunch against the "Penelope," scraping along her side and taunting her with piratical intention. But she was firm and answered not a word, giving only a few scales of her weather-beaten paint as a sort of peace-offering.

The "Acret" was all the while accompanying us, most of the time ahead, for she drew only eight feet, so she could sail nearer shore than we could, where the water was clearer of ice. We anchored two nights and a day, again sheltered behind a grounded iceberg.

The "Acret" and "Penelope" were tied up side by side, and we exchanged calling courtesies. This crew was intending to prospect in couples, each two men having a boat. Each person was independent of any other man, unless they should choose to form partnership among themselves. That is, they were not formed into a regular company as we were. We are no doubt better off individually as we are, though this remains to be proved.

After spending several days slowly making our way along the Alaskan coast towards Kotzebue, through the still breaking ice, on July 2 we found ourselves really in a dangerous position. The wind began to blow from out to sea, thus crowding the ice towards shore, making our sailing quarters more and more limited. We were already running too close in, from two to three fathoms, when suddenly the schooner ran aground, and we found ourselves stuck on a sandy bottom, with the ice rapidly moving down on us. An anchor was quickly towed out and dropped, so that by heaving in on the anchor chain the boat could be dragged out into deep water. This was slowly being accomplished, when a mass of ice too large to pole off caught against the schooner, causing a tremendous strain on the anchor chain.

Another ice cake floated against the first, and the "Penelope" would have been crowded deeper and deeper aground had not, after much chopping and prying, a crack opened up across the ice on our port bow. The two pieces swung apart, leaving the "Penelope" free. Again we tried to heave into deeper water, and finally with all sails set and all hands pulling on the chain, the boat slid off in time to escape another big

sheet of ice. Of course this was one of the few times we did not feel like shouting and singing. We held our breath. It was an unpleasant experience, but one upon which we can look back with a sort of quiet satisfaction. We shall at least have one hair-breadth escape to narrate to our friends at home. After dodging and threading our way, the captain finally sailed us into an open tract of water outside the ice.

Natives with Walrus-hide Canoe.

We have made little progress these last days. We have been sailing about in circles, at times coming within forty miles of Cape Blossom, but still blocked by the line of ice that closes the mouth of Kotzebue Sound. It is now rapidly breaking up and melting, and as soon as an off-shore wind sets in, the ice will be surely driven out to sea and our path will be clear. We are fifty days from San Francisco, and the majority of us are longing for land. Vessels are constantly coming in sight.

Last night twelve vessels besides our own were seen waiting for the ice to open. What a mad rush this is to a land nobody knows anything about, and whose treasure-trove, if she holds any, is far in the interior! There is plenty of country, if not of gold, for us all, and we can take our chances.

We have spoken the bark "Guardian" from Seattle with 130 on board. The barkentine "Northern Light" from San Francisco with 120 on board; the bark "Leslie D." with 58 on board, besides the "Catherine Sudden," and others whom we have not been near enough to speak.

While we were near shore natives, Eskimos, came on board in their skin canoes nearly every day, and often stayed several hours with us. Indeed they would remain with us all the time if allowed to. They are very greasy and not at all desirable in their present condition, dressed entirely in skins, and owning few civilized implements. Some were on summer hunting trips from as far as the Diomede Islands and the opposite Siberian shore. We have made some fine trades with them. Rivers, one of the boys, got a good skin kyak for a pair of overalls, a match safe and a few other trinkets. I got some nice seal (not the fur seal) skins for an outing shirt, and about one hundred yards of strong raw-hide rope, for soiled socks, undershirts, etc.

It is a good opportunity for obtaining spears, toys, implements, and clothing of Indian manufacture, etc., if only I could spare the stuff to trade. With all the hundreds of people coming to the coast this year, the trade will be spoiled by next year, or I would send home for a box of articles for trade.

Educated Natives.

These natives really require very little outside of their own resources, so it is hard to tell what articles would be likely to strike

their fancy. Lead, powder, tobacco, calico and clothes would be the best things.

The prince or chief of this tribe of Indians was an intelligent young man about twenty-five years old. He could not speak our language, but, strange to say, his wife, who accompanied him, was educated and refined. She had received some schooling at Port Clarence. It was she who interpreted for all of us during our trading hours.

The natives came in families, and the children were not uninteresting. Not a baby was heard to cry, although in the canoe for hours at a time, nor would they try to move. These canoes or kyaks are very strange boats, and prove quite treacherous to the novice. It looks easy rowing in one of them. I had learned the trick during my hunting about Sitka two years ago, and could not be induced to try my hand in a hurry. Not so Casey, who went out by himself in Rivers' new kyak. He started out all right, shouting that it was like riding a bicycle, "very hard to keep balanced in." He was getting along finely, keeping near the vessel, when he grew over-confident, and a misstroke with the paddle set him out of balance, and boat and poor Casey went rolling over together in the water. He struggled and kept to the surface long enough for a rope to be thrown out to him, but he could not get his legs out of the hole in the kyak for several seconds. Seconds are hours in this blistering ice-water, and had he been further from home he could not have survived the chill.

No one has tried kyaking since, but as soon as we reach shallow water I mean to practice until I have revived the lost art.

We are now inside the Arctic Circle, about 67 degrees north latitude. That is pretty well north for Southern Californians who, at home, rub their ears when the frost nips the tomato plants in January.

CHAPTER III.

CAPE BLOSSOM, July 13, 1898.—The voyage is behind us. What is floating ice to a ship's crew safe on shore! We can laugh at whales, and unfriendly breezes that whisper tales of shipwreck on barren coasts. And we can walk at all hours of the day and night without holding on to the rail, and we don't have to cook breakfast and supper and dinner in an 8 x 8 galley. Oh, the charm of being on land again, a land without visible limit; a land where we are not crowded, and where we are not hindered from our work by newspaper reporters!

I am sitting at the camp-table in the dining-tent near the new "Penelope" ship-yards, and the sounds that greet my ears are varied. The incessant pounding gives evidence of vigorous work on our river boat; the hum of the forge and the ring of the anvil where Casey and Stevenson are making fittings for the engine, the wash of the surf close at hand, and last, but not least, the low, irritating, depressing, measly whine of the mosquito — this last word to mean the race. I would not intimate that there is one mosquito, or twenty; there are millions! We wear bobinet masks which protect our heads very well. To-night the wind is blowing fresh, and the winged plagues are using most of their force to keep their land legs. It is very warm, and a little exertion brings out a copious perspiration, but it is less fatiguing to keep hard at work with a will than to stop and think about it. No ice now in sight. Within two rods of camp is a deep snowdrift, where we obtain nice drinking water. Ice may be seen anywhere in Alaska all the hot days, but it is so mixed and grown in with the everlasting mosses that it is not fit to melt for drinking save in rare cases. Our ship-yards are located on the pebbly beach, and it all seems so roomy and clean after our long stay on the little "Penelope," though on account of the mosquitoes we still sleep on shipboard. The boat is anchored a mile from shore on account of the shallow water. As I look out to sea I bethink me that in all probability Kotzebue, the Russian explorer, stood on this exact spot and looked about him as long ago as July, 1816. And the mosquitoes were biting him, too!

I can afford to sleep only every other night these days. There will be time enough to sleep when the sun goes to bed. The landscape is beautiful—grassy meadows, green, bushy hillsides, and, over all, thousands of wild-flowers of a dozen kinds; dandelions, daisies, sweet-peas, and many other varieties. I have found a few beetles and have seen some butterflies, but get little time for collecting either insects or birds. My duty is to the company, and any time in which I may do what I love best to do must be taken out of my sleeping hours. Everyone is working with might and main, as the missionaries tell us that winter sets in by the last of August.

By the way, we surprised these missionaries, who have been located at Cape Blos-

som some two years or more, and in that time have seen few fellow-countrymen. C. C. Reynolds and Clyde and Dr. Coffin were old acquaintances, and waked them up one day all of a sudden. The three were told by the natives of the best way to approach the mission building, and, as they did so, the first thing that met their eyes were little boxes of lettuce and radishes and onions set on the sunny side of the cabin to steal the breath and smile of Old Sol, while he has his eye on the place. This is a Friends' Mission, and the three missionaries are from Whittier, California.

They are Robert Samms and wife, and a Miss Hunnicut.

The boys are working on the river boat in

First "Friends'" Mission.

two shifts from twelve to twelve. This makes time for four meals a day, the largest meals being at the two twelves, and I have one of these to get. I also have the 6 p. m. and the midnight meals to get; Shafer gets the others. Of course we have our assistants who wait on table and wash dishes. Who would have thought I would become a mess cook!

I have just dressed three salmon weighing about fifteen pounds each. We traded ten gingersnaps to an Indian for them. They will make fully two meals for all of us.

July 16, 2 p. m. In the dining-tent at "Penelope" ship-yards.—Yesterday was a great day for us. We received our first mail from home. The revenue cutter "Bear" brought it, and it will probably be our last. It is sweltering hot. We find our most congenial employment in drinking ice-water and taking cold baths. And no one suffers from it. The river boat is nearly done and we have been here only a week. To-day our first prospecting party starts out, one of two, to go up the Kowak River in advance of the main party. They are taking a month's provisions, and, besides prospecting for gold, are to locate our winter quarters. We hope to make two trips with supplies up the river before it freezes. There are so many vessels of every description here that it looks like a seaport harbor. The natives are "catching on" to trading schemes, and are asking exorbitant prices for everything. We offered sixty dollars worth of flour and other things for a canoe and failed to get one. I doubt the things being of much use to us if we had them. The skins soak up water rapidly and are then easily torn or worn. The Indians keep them in water only a few hours at a time before taking them up on the beach and turning them over to dry.

Shafer went with our first party as cook, and that leaves me with seventeen men to feed. I want to get in some collecting this fall and am willing to work hard now. Of course everyone of the party is industrious; we expected to work. The mosquitoes do not like me and so I have the advantage of the others. I keep a smudge burning in the tents so the boys may eat in peace.

Penelope Ship Yards, July 17.—Oh, how hot it is to-day! And the mosquitoes are rushing business, as if aware time is nearly up with them. I slept on shore last night. We had a small tent and banked it up all around tight, and then made a smudge and shut ourselves in. We killed all the mosquitoes in sight and finally got to bed for a good seven hours' sleep. There is plenty of driftwood along the beaches, and we shall not be obliged to draw on our supply of coal for a good while. Several tons of it is coming on the "Mermaid." The vessel has not yet arrived, neither have several others whose crews warned us before we left San Francisco last spring that we would not reach Kotzebue this year. And here we are a week ahead of them, and one party prospecting up the river already.

July 19.—This morning the "Helen," as we have named our river boat, was towed out to the "Penelope," where the boiler and engines were hoisted on. She is back again now, and all is well save Rivers, who had his fingers smashed.

There must be a thousand people now in the Sound, and more are coming. These first-comers are respectable men, with few exceptions. A drunken white man shot an Indian up near the mission, and now there will be trouble. The Indian law dates far back — "An eye for an eye." A good many accidents are happening. Some men are lost, and so are whole loads of provisions. We are safe; have lost nothing. Birds are numerous now. I went up the slough last night and got three ducks. This noon I served up a hot duck pie. This is the summer home for many birds that spend their winters south. Every morning I hear the plaintive song of the Gambel's sparrows from the bushy thickets on the hillsides, just as we hear them from the hedges at home in winter. Other familiar birds now rearing their broods here are the barn swallow, Savannah sparrow and tree sparrow. Insects are common as the warm weather continues. I caught a bumblebee this morning and bottled him. As fast as the snowdrifts melt, grass and flowers spring up, crowding the snow, so to speak, into more and more limited quarters, and finally replacing it altogether. The brightest and greenest spots are where the snow has the most recently disappeared. This is a beautiful country. Some day when the speedy airship shall make distance trivial, it will be a popular summer resort, except that the water is too icy for the average bather.

Miners' Launch.

CHAPTER IV.

JULY 23, Penelope Ship Yards. — The "Helen" is at last ready. Three of the boys have cut up several cords of wood into proper lengths for the boiler.

I cannot help mentioning the flowers again. New kinds appear each day without so much as sending up a leaf in advance. There are dandelions, and purple asters, and cream cups, and bluebells, and big daisies, and buttercups, and tall, blue flowers like our garden hyacinths. There are acres of blue-grass as smooth and green as if newly mown. Birds and bumblebees are abundant. I should like to collect more of these, but still have a hungry mob to feed. The boys are working hard at shifting the cargo, and chopping wood and doing other things, and of course are hungry as bears. My work gives me some half-hours which I spend collecting. We have good stores. For supper to-night my menu is baked navy beans—Boston baked beans away up here at Kotzebue Sound!—corn bread, apple sauce, fricasseed salmon eggs, fried salmon, duck stew, tea, etc. It will be appreciated to the last crumb by the Arctic circle.

The days are growing shorter. The sun now sets before eleven at night, leaving only a short semi-twilight. The doctor has just come in from a visit to the mission. He reports ships still arriving, and prospectors having all sorts of luck. Flour is three dollars for fifty pounds. Liquor is being sold to the natives without stint. It is against the law, but what is law without a force to back it? Dr. Sheldon Jackson is expected soon, and he is the man who will not be afraid to hunt out the rascals who are spoiling the natives. I am so nearly related to the American Indians myself that I naturally take sides with these natives. You know I was born on the Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita reservation, when those Indians

were savages or nearly so, and I learned to love them before I could speak. Here and now it is the old familiar story of the white man's abuse of the redskins. It makes me indignant. We found these people confiding, generous, helpful, simple-hearted, without a shadow of treachery except as they have learned it from the whites, who are invading their homes and killing them as they will, with little or no excuse. Many of these gold-hunters that I hear of have already done more harm in a few days than the missionaries can make up for in years. I could write the history in detail, but desist. It will never all be written or told. The natives are worked up to the last point of endurance and will surely kill the whites. Whisky

The "Helen."

is doing its share of havoc, although a few of the faithful mission Indians are trying to keep the others quiet.

Sunday, July 24.—We are now waiting for the tide to take the "Helen" out of the creek. Steam will soon be up.

July 29, Dining Tent.—We are still here and the rains have begun. The "Helen" made her trial trip and works well. We have discovered that she cannot transport all our goods up the river, so have delayed in order to build a barge. It is two feet deep, ten feet wide and eighteen feet long, with a capacity of ten tons.

August 1.—The storm washed the sand up and locked the "Helen" into Penelope inlet. The only thing to be done was to dig a channel and float her out. From ten in the morning until ten in the evening we worked. We had to pry her out as the tide kept falling. We could not have succeeded had it not been for some kind Indians who helped us. They are always ready to help when they see us in trouble. Of course we treated them to a good supper and they were happy.

After steaming out to the "Penelope," we started north around the peninsula to the inlet, arriving about two in the morning, after the hardest day's work we have had yet. Here at Mission Inlet Dr. Coffin, Fancher and myself are left with the camp outfit and a load of provisions. After three hours' sleep and a hot breakfast the rest went back to the schooner with the "Helen" for another load, and to bring the barge, which by this time should be finished. Soon after they left, yesterday, a stiff breeze sprang up and we were very anxious. The "Helen" is little better than a flat-bottomed scow and cannot stand much of a sea. An inlet near us is, we think, deep enough to float the "Penelope," if we could get her in, and here she would be safe all winter. The missionaries tell us that no boat like her can stand the crushing ice in the open sea during the winter, and that this inlet is the only protected place for miles around.

The mission and village are two miles west of us. There are four frame houses and a hundred tents. A Mr. Haines of San Francisco, took supper with us last night and gave us the shipping news. Men are left with nothing save the clothes on their backs; others are drowned; many are homesick. Rumor reaches us that gold has been found on the Kowak. But rumor is not to be relied upon when it is gold that sets it afloat.

If there is gold on the Kowak we shall find it. Our present care is to get our supplies up there in safety, but we are going at a slow pace. Six of our party are already up the river, six are on the "Helen" en route to the "Penelope" headquarters, two are at the ship-yards, and four are on the schooner. Dr. Coffin, Fancher and myself are here at Mission Inlet. This accounts for all of us as at present divided. We expect the return of the "Helen" to-night.

We three have been living high since the others left. For supper, with the help of our San Francisco visitor, we got away with three ptarmigan, two curlew, twelve flapjacks with syrup, stewed prunes, etc. After supper we went to sleep and did not awake until nine this morning, when we had ptarmigan broth, fried mush, ham and flapjacks. The other day we picked three quarts of salmon berries. They are very fine eating, something like a blackberry in size and shape, but are red like a raspberry and grow flat on the ground like a strawberry vine. They seem a combination of the three.

Two other kinds, inferior to the salmon berries, also grow on the ground. We want

to eat everything in sight. If there were rattlesnakes I believe that I should cook them. I have broiled a good fat rattlesnake when hunting in the Sierras, and found it a dish for an epicure — that is, if the epicure happened not to see it until served. I put up nine bird-skins this morning. They are two redpolls, one Siberian yellow wagtail, three ptarmigan, one tree-sparrow and two curlew. I have put up seventy-five skins so far. I have also saved quite a number of insects, but these are scarce since the rains set in. Last night I heard the beautiful song of the fox-sparrow from a hill on the opposite side of the inlet. A raven, the first I have seen, flew high overhead with ominous croaks. "Evil omen," say the natives.

Mission Inlet, Aug. 5, 1898.—The "Helen" has returned after a perilous trip. She had the barge in tow and both were heavily loaded. It took ten hours to cover twelve miles, so rough was the sea. She ran aground twice, and the boys were indeed "tired" on their arrival, but were wonderfully refreshed in a short time by flapjacks and bacon, which I served to them piping hot, after which they slept for eight hours. It has taken a good deal of hard work to get ready to make our start, and a good storm is in order. "Indian Tom" is guide, and he knows everything about the river and country. He says, "Wind too much; bimeby all right," and we take his advice. The "Helen" and the barge in tow are to carry two-thirds of the year's supplies up the river, and the "Helen" will alone return for the rest. We cannot get the "Penelope" into Mission Inlet, as we hoped, hence it has been decided to leave the captain and two men with her all winter. The provisions not needed this winter are stored on the schooner, and she will be anchored down in Escholtz Bay, in as sheltered a place as can be found, where she will freeze in. It looks dangerous, but it is our only alternative. It would not take much ice pressure to crush her, and then good-by to our provisions! They will try lifting her by windlass and other means, and the captain shows his pluck in the emergency. Pluck is what is needed in these Arctic regions, besides plenty of flapjacks. Jett and Fancher remain with the captain on the "Penelope." They hope to shoot polar bear and have other winter sport, but I guess they will have a monotonous time. Perhaps some of us will take a sledge journey down to them in winter.

Dr. Coffin, Wyse, Rivers and myself are to stay here until the "Helen" returns for us and the remainder of the stuff. I always volunteer to stay at camp when a person is wanted, for in this way I get in some collecting. The rest don't see so much fun in staying at camp. It may be two weeks before the boat gets back and, outside of my camp duties, I shall have considerable leisure for my favorite pastime. Doctor and I went out and got thirteen ducks, which made a good meal for the crowd before they started. We also had a large mess of stewed salmon berries which, though very tart, proved a most acceptable change from our dried fruit.

"Helen" and Crew Start up the Kowak River.

Mission Inlet, Aug. 9.—The "Helen" left for the Kowak yesterday and the weather has been perfect, so we hope she has safely crossed Holtham Inlet. Until she returns we four are to keep camp and finish up some work for the winter. We are becoming acquainted with the natives. Like those I knew in Dakota and the Indian Territory, they are very superstitious. They make us pass in front of a tent in which is a sick person, and if we are towing a boat past along the beach, we must get into the water and row around the camp so as not to walk past. Many of them are ill, and they lay it to the gold hunters; but it is really from exposure in following the whites around. The

doctor has treated several, and if they recover he is "all right;" but if they die, it is his fault. Not so very unlike other folks! The doctor makes the natives pay for medicine, as this, he says, "is the better policy." He charged a salmon for some pills last night, and in another case where more extended services were required, he charged a nickel and two salmon. He does not intend to infringe upon any existing fee bills in the States, but if any "medicos" thereabouts pine for a more profitable field, there is plenty of room at Kotzebue Sound.

Some of the prospectors who went up the river earlier are now returning broken-hearted, and are going home.

Mission Inlet, Aug. 11.—The "Helen" came in last night with all safe aboard. They got about one hundred miles up the river, and concluded it better to get us all up that far before going on. We expect to start to-night. Our folks met two of our first prospecting party, who reported going as far as Fort Cosmos, three hundred miles up the Kowak, and who announced that place to be our best winter harbor. They had found some "colors," but nothing definite as to gold.

This will prove my last entry on the Kotzebue, but the winter's record will not be dull, I am thinking, by the time we thaw out in the spring of 1899. C. C. and the doctor, whose proclivities are well known to be of a semi-religious type, have a whole library of good books, such as "Helpful Thoughts," "The Greatest Thing in the World," Bible commentaries, and so on, with which we may enliven the winter evening that knows no cock-crowing. However, we shall have games and lighter reading.

I have now more than one hundred bird-skins, some of them rare, such as Sabines' gull, Point Barrow gull, etc. I believe I am the only one of the party who could get the smallest satisfaction out of a possible disappointment as to gold.

CHAPTER V.

PENELOPE CAMP, Kowak River, Aug. 28.—Here we are, one hundred and seventy miles from the mouth of the Kowak River and hard at work on our winter cabin. The "Helen" is almost a failure, else we should have been much farther up the river. The river is swift and has many rapids which we could not stem. The boat is slow. Her wheel is too small. She will be remodeled this winter. It took five days to come this far, and, as there are two more loads to bring up, we thought it best to halt. We have been here a week and the walls of the cabin are nearly done, so that we are on the eve of owning a winter residence on the Kowak. We are expecting the "Helen" back soon with her second load.

The Kowak River, though scarcely indicated on good-sized maps, is as large as the Missouri. At our camp it is nearly a mile across, and very deep on this side, with sand bars in the middle. Other folks are having a harder time than we. Only three out of the dozen or more river steamers are a success. One is fast on a sand bar, and it looks as if she would stay there.

Some of our crowd think we had a hard time, but when we compare our lot with that of others we see it differently. Hundreds are toiling up in the rain, towing their loaded skiffs mile after mile along muddy banks. We have not had an accident worth mentioning unless it be the loss of a water pail. We took the wrong channel once coming up and steamed twenty-four hours up a branch river. It was the Squirrel River, and although but a tributary to the Kowak, is as large as the Sacramento and San Joaquin combined. It was so very crooked that at one point where we stopped to wood up, I climbed a hill and could see its route for several miles. Our course went around the compass once and half way again. When we got back to the Kowak we made good time until we reached the first rapids, where our trouble began. The "Helen" would swing around and lose all she had made every few minutes when the current struck her broadside. Finally a squad of us took to the river bank with a long tow-rope, and foot by foot she was towed past the critical points. There were six of these rapids. When the wind blew there was fresh trouble; it would catch on the side of the "house" and blow the boat around in spite of us. She almost got away from us once, and we were in danger of being dragged off the bank, in spite of the fact that we dug our heels into the ground and braced with might and main. It was a tug of war. And such is gold hunting in the Far North!

Many others had a still harder time. We passed thirty of these parties in one day towing their provisions, while many lost their boats. There must inevitably be great suffering here this winter. Men have not

realized what a long winter it will be and are poorly provisioned.

Our crowd is becoming a trifle disappointed as to the gold proposition, and of course the general discontent is infectious. Hundreds are going back down the river every day, spreading defeat and failure in their path, and yet they have done no actual prospecting. This is a large country and a year is none too long to hunt; but with many parties the result is that after panning out a little sand the job is thrown up.

A Morning Hunt.

Birds are all right here, if there isn't any gold. I have been into the woods only twice so far, but secured another rare specimen of Hennicott's Willow Warbler. There is a bear in the woods back of camp. I have "laid" for him three times, but he is very shy.

Sept. 1.—The "Helen" came with her last load yesterday, and our whole crowd is together again excepting the three men with the "Penelope."

After a big pow-wow it has been decided to divide for the winter. Ten men are to take the "Helen," with supplies, and push up the river as far as possible. They think they can do some mining during the winter. We who are destined to live together here for eight months are Dr. Coffin, C. C. Reynolds, Harry Reynolds, Clyde Baldwin, Cox, Brown, Rivers, Wyse and myself. Time will prove if this is a congenial combination. We shall resemble California canned goods in our narrow limits, and the winter will show our "keeping qualities." Andy and Albert, our Swede sailors, leave us to-day. They were hired and do not belong to the company, and will return to Kotzebue, where they hope to ship for St. Michaels.

Camp Penelope, Kowak River, Sept. 13.—Our cabin is done. It measures 25 x 30 feet. We moved in on the 7th. The river rose very high and threatened to inundate our tents. The place where they were is now under water. Our cabin roof was not a success. It was too flat. On the night we moved in it rained heavily, and about 2 a. m. we were roused by the water pouring in on our beds and our precious supplies. We got to work without delay. The roof could not be repaired without rebuilding it, so we spread it all over with flies and tent cloth, which froze stiff for the winter, and now we are dry. When the cabin was started it was intended for our whole party, but there is no room to spare even now with only nine occupants. The foundation was leveled on the side of the knoll, so that the top of the hill is nearly as high as the roof and the earth is banked the rest of the way over the wall. That leaves no point for the north wind to strike the house. We made a lean-to on the west and the door from the cabin opens into it. We have two windows, which we brought with us, fitted on the south. The interior of the cabin is a single room seven feet high. It has a gable a foot or two higher, which gives "ample breathing space," as I told the boys, but which I have my eye on as a store-

Our Winter Cabin.

room for my collection. The roof above this structure is fearfully and wonderfully made. If it had a trifle more pitch to it, to make it shed water, it would be better. A heavy ridge-pole and stringers run lengthwise, and over these are closely laid poles, the butts at the eaves along the sides, and the slender tops bent over and clinched on the opposite side of the roof. Above the

poles is packed a thick layer of moss. Above the moss is a layer of heavy sod with the dirt side up. Above all is a layer of spruce boughs like shingles. These boughs grow thick and flat, with needles pointing the same way, so they make good roofing.

The logs of the walls are chinked tightly with the moss. The floor is the natural sand. We did not cut the timber from near the house on account of the protection it gives us from the north winds. Trees large and long enough for building purposes are not very numerous, and we had to carry them a good ways. A few are as large as twenty inches at the butt, but mostly they are from ten to fifteen inches. It is all that eight of us can do to struggle along with one of these logs, they are so heavy, and we

Start for the Hunt River, Towing our Boat.

put them on rollers sometimes. Four of the men can easily carry one of the twenty-four foot logs, but a green spruce log of any size is always heavier than it looks.

I have initiated "Brownie" into the secret mysteries of the cook stove, and am one of the regular laborers now, working hard ten hours a day. But yet it is fun; for we are working for ourselves, with but the clean woods all about us, and there is a fascination in chopping up the spruces, their delightful fragrance permeating everywhere.

Sept. 19.—Six of us have just returned from a trip up the Hunt River — Harry Reynolds, Wyse, Cox, Rivers, Clyde and myself. I was culinary officer as usual. We had the eighteen-foot sealing boat, and it was loaded pretty heavily. The whole of us had to work for it, one in the stern of the boat to steer, one wading at the tow-line as near the boat as possible, to lift it over snags, and the other four tugging at the tow-line. We wore hip boots and outside of them oil-skin trousers tied around the ankles. Even with this outfit we were constantly getting into the water all over. Rivers got a soaking the first day. He shot a duck and jumped out of the boat in pursuit. The bottom is so plain through the water that it is deceptive, and he went in up to his waist, but he grabbed the side of the boat to keep from going under. He got his duck — and a ducking thrown in. We had to pull him in and to the shore, where we got him out of his wet clothes. In the afternoon Wyse also got a ducking by falling into a pool as he was scrambling up a steep bank. We found good camping-places. We had two tents, which we put up facing each other, with a flap left up on the side of one of them for a door. The two were heated by the sheet-iron camp-stove. At noon we did not put up the tents, but got dinner in the open — flap-jacks, coffee and bacon. I shot two geese the first day out, which gave us a couple of meals. They were young and so fat I could not save their skins. But I made a drawing of one of them so that I could be positive of their identity. Looking them up when I got home where my books are, I found them to be the Hutchins goose. The doctor and I shot two white-fronted geese on the banks of the Kowak. We see a good many, but they also see us and we have to do a good deal of sneaking through the bushes to get any.

We had some narrow escapes, especially Cox, who fell into a whirlpool. He was dragged off his feet by the rushing water, but we pulled him into the boat after a frightful struggle.

On the fourth day out Clyde and I thought we would explore a little cañon. Harry Reynolds had washed out several pans of sand from different bars on the way up, but had not found a trace of gold. Clyde and I hoped to have better luck, and started out in high spirits with spade and pick and gold-pan to do our first prospecting.

We found a brook in the cañon where we panned some without success. Finally we found a place where the stream ran over bed-rock. The rock had cracks and fissures running crosswise with the stream, so we reasoned that if there was gold above, particles would have been caught in these cracks. We dammed the brook and turned the stream to one side, exposing the fissures in the rock. We then gathered several pans of sand from the niches, examining it with

wistful eyes, but no trace of gold did we find. So we gave it up on that stream. We found nothing save Fool's Gold. We kept on up the cañon and, as it was yet early, decided to climb the mountain peak. As we went up the spruces grew smaller and finally disappeared. The sides were barren save for a thin covering of moss and lichens and patches of stunted huckleberry bushes. These bushes, not more than three or four inches high, bore hordes of luscious ripe huckleberries, and nearly every hundred feet in our climb we would drop on our knees on the soft moss and fill ourselves, so often could we find room for more. Another little black spicy berry growing in crannies was good. Just as we were toiling up the last slope a flock of twenty white ptarmigan flew up in front of us, and circled down to another ridge. They, too, had been feeding on the huckleberries.

As we rested ourselves, sheltered in a niche of the summit crag safe from the chilling wind, a little red-backed mouse ran from a crevice and scampered through the moss straight to a huckleberry patch, his own winter garden. Clouds began to gather on the highest peaks, and we started down, leaving them behind.

The moss was slippery and we found that we could slide down the steep pitches easier than we could walk or jump. I remembered seeing the little Sioux slide down the hills of Dakota in government skillets, and immediately sat down on my shovel, steering with the handle just as I had seen the Indian boys do, and made terrific progress. I was soon able to pick myself up, feigning to examine a ledge of quartz while I rubbed my posterior, and looked back for Clyde.

He tried sitting in the gold-pan and started all right, but soon found that he couldn't steer. He went at a frightful rate, tearing down the steep slide backwards, until he, too, found himself examining the geological strata while giving some attention to his anatomy. And then we had to hunt for the gold-pan which, from the musical sounds which grew fainter and fainter and finally died away altogether, must have got switched off into the bottomless abyss. Will it be found some day generations hence and borne off in triumph as proof of a prehistoric race? It was a race. Such is gold-hunting in far-away Alaska.

At camp that evening we were joined by a native, "Charley," who told us by signs and by what few words he could speak, that he had come part way up the Hunt River behind us, but had left his birch-bark canoe several miles below, roaming off to hunt in the neighboring hills.

He told us that he had shot a bear the day before and had cached it down the river, his boat being too small to take it. He wanted us to go and get it. Sure enough, a few miles down, we found the bear as Charley had said. It was all cut up, the skin being stretched on poles and fastened in a tree. The carcass was also divided and hidden in a pole-box raised high on a slender scaffold. Charley had expected to come on his sled later on and take it home. After loading on this prize we continued down the river, the Indian accompanying us in his canoe. The rapids were furious and many, and we shot them as if we had been behind a locomotive. It took a cool head to steer a boat under these conditions, and Cox did it. At one place the stream had washed under a bank above and trees had fallen over, making a complete set of rafters. The current rushed the boat under a series of these, like city roofs, and it kept us busy to duck our heads.

We Receive Visitors.

We arrived home yesterday, making in seven hours a distance that had taken us three days to go up. Charley gave us bear meat to last a month. It tastes fishy, as the bears live mostly on salmon in summer, but it is a welcome addition to our larder. During the trip I obtained two hawk owls and an Alaskan three-toed woodpecker, both species being new to my collection.

CHAPTER VI.

OCT. 15, 1898.—In looking over my diary I find that I have recorded no "bad weather." This comes of my having inherited a tendency to look on the bright side

of things. I hear such complaints as "bad weather," "disagreeable day," "awfully cold," etc. Days when some are grumbling about its being "too hot" or "too cold," "too wet" or "too windy," I find some special reason for thinking it very pleasant. It is no virtue of mine, as I said. It is natural. Up till to-day there has been warm weather mostly. Now there is a sudden drop in the temperature. Seven degrees above zero this morning. The north wind is blowing and makes one's ears tingle. All standing water is frozen and the Kowak has begun to show patches of ice floating down with the current. The great river is choking. It is being filled with ice which can move but slowly, grinding and crunching and piling up into ridges where opposing fields meet. Suddenly it is at a standstill. In a day or two the ice will support us, as it does now on the margin.

The Wreck of the "John Riley."

So quickly does the cold of winter close its grip. All these achievements of nature are new and interesting to me. I ran down to the river bank a dozen times to-day to note how the process is going on. It is very low now on account of the dry weather of the past weeks, but, as the choking goes on, a flow of water comes down from above over the ice, making a double fastness. The only fish that can survive will be those that seek the deeper places. There will be no more passing of boats. We hear that the steamer "John Riley" has been left high and dry on a sand-bar, and has broken in two in the middle by her own weight. Two other boats are aground on sand-bars, and must be taken to pieces if ever rescued.

Since the Hunt River trip I have been at home mostly. I have been cook, of course, a part of the time. There is no special work to be done outside.

I have collected some birds, but they are growing very scarce. I went into the woods to-day for a couple of hours, and saw only two redpolls.

Redpolls look and act very much like our goldfinches in the States. Rivers made me a bird-table. It is strange, but everybody declared they would "fire" me bodily if I continued to skin birds on the dining-table; that is why Rivers took pity on me and made me the finest table I could wish for, and a chair to match.

We have the saw-mill. Dr. Coffin and Harry Cox, with the aid of others, ran that for several days, and enough boards were ripped out to cover the cabin floor, besides library and cupboard shelves. They declare "whipping" is hard work. I didn't try it myself, as I was cooking at the time. I prefer to run a cross-cut saw. The saw-mill worked "relays," working five minutes, talking fifteen minutes, resting a half hour before the next took its place. Whip-sawing is an interesting process, especially to the man who stands below and looks up into the shower of sawdust. The doctor advised the plan of wearing snow-glasses, so that the sawdust difficulty was obviated, but the hard work was still there. The doctor tried his best to get me into the business, for he said it would surely tend to straighten my back, which stoops from constant skinning of birds at the table. He got such a "crick" in his back from whip-sawing that he could scarcely sleep for several nights.

Besides the saw-mill, there was the furniture factory. C. C. and Harry Reynolds and Dr. Coffin were engaged in that enterprise. As a result the cabin is supplied with double bedsteads, with spring-pole slats and mattresses. And there are lines of wooden pegs in the wall for hanging clothing, and carpets for the bed-rooms made of gunny-sacking stuffed with dry moss.

A partial partition runs lengthwise of the cabin. At the kitchen end this partition is composed of a tier of wood, then an entrance space, and then a series of shelves from top to bottom for pantry, medical department and library, which latter is extensive. At the farther end is another open space communicating with the "bed-rooms." The whole inside of the cabin is lined with white canvas tenting, which brightens us up ten times better than dark logs. On the south side of the partition is the "living-room," "dining-room" and "kitchen;" all in one apartment to be sure, but yet with their recognized limits. On the north side of the partition is the bed-room. There are three double beds and three single ones, according to the wishes of the occupants. A pole runs crosswise of the apartment, and on each side of this is a line of pegs hung full of clothes. This forms a wall dividing the apartment into "bed-rooms." Carpeted alleys run between the beds, and the walls are hung with clothing. What we are to do with all this clothing I do not know.

Oct. 21.—Just through supper and everyone has settled down to read, excepting several who have gone out to "call at the

Our Sitting-room.

neighbors'." C. C. Reynolds, our president, undertaker, preacher, all-around-man, has taken to cooking. He started in well. For supper he gave us some fine tarts. I am glad to be relieved from the cooking, and do not intend to engage in the business again. We shall see.

I am skinning mice now, little red-backed fellows which swarm in the woods and around the houses. I set my traps every night. This morning I had a dozen. Wolverines and foxes are common about here, but they are too cute for me and decline to be caught in the steel traps which I keep constantly set for them. An Indian shot two deer in the mountains and brought them to the village. The doctor traded for some venison, which is better than the bear meat, though I have no craving for either. The boys think me a baby because I prefer "mush" to meat.

Last Sunday the temperature fell to even zero. The trees were heavily covered with hoar frost, and the scene, as the sun rose upon it, was magnificent.

Everything is frozen solid. The river has nearly a foot of ice already. The natives are fishing through the ice and their methods are very novel to me. They select a narrow place in the river, and through holes cut in the ice they stick spruce poles with the branches left on, so that a fence is formed across the river between the surface and the bed. At intervals openings are left, and across these openings nets are stretched. The fish are coming down the river at this time in the year, and when they reach one of these fences they swim along until they come to one of the openings, when they are caught in the net. An Indian woman lies on the ice face down, all covered over tight above with brush and tent cloth, so she can watch when the fish get into the net. Besides netting them this way, the natives have baited lines laid for the larger fish. Hooks are not used, but the bait, a small fish for instance, is tied to the end of a string, and with it a short, slender stick. A large fish swallows the bait and the stick with it. When the fish starts away the line is jerked taut, and the stick turns crosswise in his stomach, and holds the game secure until drawn up through the hole in the ice.

Several of us were over watching the Indians fishing yesterday and were examining some of the fish. I picked one up in my innocence, but was commanded to put it down. The women were very much vexed with me, and were careful to place the fish exactly the way it was. Clyde came with his camera to take some photographs, but the natives considered it "bad luck," and

Our Kitchen.

he was remonstrated with vehemently, and finally went away, dallying until he had taken a shot or two. These women will

have their hands full with us boys before the winter is over, I fear.

The natives will not dress any deer skins until the snow comes, "so that game will be plenty" this winter. I am at work upon a small vocabulary of the Eskimo language, and already have two hundred words. The language has many guttural sounds, and is hard to express with letters, but I am learning it rapidly, and getting the words written as accurately as possible under difficulties.

One of the Indian boys, Lyabukh, is very bright, and understands what I want. He is learning English very fast.

Our preacher holds services regularly

Come to Church.

every Sunday, and we go out to gather in all the Indians of the village and the white men in the vicinity. Four parties of three white men each, have put up winter quarters within a mile of us, so we have quite a community. Besides these, there are some twenty prospectors six miles below us and five above us. All have built snug winter cabins. About a mile above us, back in the woods, twenty Eskimos have established their village for the winter, and built their dug-outs, or igloos. There is seldom an hour in the day when two or more natives are not in our cabin, and, with a little encouragement, such as C. C., with his missionary instincts, gives them, they have become very persistent visitors.

Last Sunday services were largely attended, there being fifteen natives, and ten of our white neighbors. It was proposed, and unanimously carried, that a church be constructed by this community. So Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday over a dozen men were at work on the new chapel, which is located back in a sheltered place in the woods. It is now finished except the fireplace, and will serve as a church, school-room, and lecture-room or town hall.

Several of us are going to start a school for the Eskimo children in the neighborhood. We have seven months before us to occupy in some manner, and why not this? It would be monotonous to be continuously biting off northern zephyrs, and pulling the threads out of a tangled beard, and rubbing one's ears, and eating baking-powder biscuit; biscuit that are none of your light, fluffy things that have no backbone to them, but something that will stay with you on a hunt or a tramp with the temperature below the counting mark. Then there are the nice fat sides of bacon carefully preserved—"the white man's buffalo meat," as the Sioux Indians used to call it. We have ordinary fried bacon, and hashed bacon, and pork chops. When it is dreadfully cold and it doesn't slice readily, we chop it up with the axe—and then it is we have pork chops!

For variety's sake, if for nothing else, we would all vote the "school." Our life on the Kowak will not be a sealed book never to be read again when once the springtime lays it away on the shelf. We shall take it down and peruse it and possibly make marginal entries in it when we are too old to do anything else. Sitting in the chimney corner toothless, and feeble of gait, it will give us pleasure to remember the "school" in the woods, on the banks of the mighty Kowak.

CHAPTER VII.

OCT. 30.—Returned last night from a six days' trip up Hunt River. Clyde and I started together with the expectation of getting far into the mountain ranges. As has been my custom from a small boy when starting on a trip, I made big preparations, much bigger than necessary. We had grub enough for two weeks. The boys expected great things on our return—bear, deer and other game, all of which was confidently promised. But to tell the honest truth, I wanted to get some chickadees and butcher birds. To carry our voluminous outfit we appropriated a sled belonging to a neighboring Indian who had gone fishing. These na-

tive sleds are very light, having birch runners, and slender spruce frame-work, the whole strongly lashed together with rawhide thongs. Every morning before loading we poured water on the runners, thus forming an ice shoe. As yet there is no snow, so that our route necessarily lay along the frozen river, which was covered with a foot of ice. Our load weighed about three hundred pounds, and where the ice was smooth little exertion was needed to draw the sled as fast as we could walk. In some places sand had blown into the ice and such spots would give us hard work. We wore "creepers" on our heavy boots — that is, a kind of conical pointed spike, screwed into the bottoms, three into the heel and four into the sole of the shoe. With these we can walk anywhere up or down upon the ice without slipping. In traveling, one of us pulled the sled, with the rope over his shoulder, while the other pushed. Across the rear of the sled were two sticks projecting backwards and upwards, with a cross-piece to push against, baby-carriage fashion.

The first day we made rapid progress, making twenty-five miles. We camped at night not far from the first foot-hills. The tent was raised in a grove of cottonwoods near the river, and soon a fire roared in the camp stove. When I had the fire well started, I went down to get a pail of water. I walked to the middle of the creek and began to chop hard where I thought the ice was thinnest. Sure enough I had judged correctly, for with the second stroke the ice gave way under me, and down I went to the arm-pits in the icy water. I had fallen through an air hole. Luckily the ice all around was firm, so that I could raise myself up and wriggle out, or else my bath might have been continued. As it was, before I could reach the tent my clothes were frozen stiff. The temperature was below zero.

Fortunately for me I had a warm tent and a change of clothes to go to. Meanwhile Clyde had cut a big pile of wood and soon we were wrestling with piles of flapjacks.

After supper I had another experience with the ice. Forgetting that I had exchanged my wet boots for a pair of shoes without creepers in them, I started to go across the river. After the first ice had formed the river had fallen, and now the ice sagged downward from the banks towards the middle, hammock-wise. As soon as I stepped on the ice my feet flew out from under me and down I slid. I got up, no worse for wear, but with a sudden recollection that I had no creepers on. I cautiously started to walk to the bank, but on account of the slant of the slippery ice, I could make little headway before slipping back. I was in a similiar position to that of a mouse in a tin basin. Finally by walking down the river a short distance, I pulled myself up by an overhanging willow.

Next morning at sunrise — eight o'clock — we started on up the river. Soon we came to long stretches of open water where the stream had been too swift to freeze over. In several places the icy margin was so narrow that it afforded room for but one runner on the ice, and we had to drag the sled over pebbles and sand.

Owing to the fact that the stream became swifter the further we went, we turned about and started back with a view to making camp among the willows down the river, where we had seen the most birds on the way up.

Native Method of Piling Winter Wood.

Clyde shot twice with his rifle at a red fox, but missed it. He got "rattled," as one usually does when shooting at game, and as I have seen good hunters do. He tried a target at the same distance as the fox had been and hit the bull's-eye squarely.

We got down to the willows late in the evening, but in time to select a sheltered place for the tent before dark. While I cooked the supper Clyde gathered a large stack of hay for our bed. In a swale near by the finest kind of red-top hay, all cured, stood waist deep. Here, among the willows, eight miles from Camp Penelope, we remained for four nights. There were a good many fox and wolf tracks in the sand, and I had my traps set all the time, but without

success. However, I obtained a mouse new to me—the lemming. Clyde tramped through the country toward the mountains, but saw nothing of importance. He fished and brought back three grayling. I paid my respects to the small birds and secured four rare chickadees, besides several redpolls, pine grosbeaks, Alaskan jay, grouse, ptarmigan, etc. I had bad luck with ptarmigan. I missed seven good shots for some reason. The ptarmigan are now clothed in very thick winter plumage, which may account for it in part.

I secured five. They are pure, spotless white with black tails. They are very conspicuous now, until the snow comes, and they seem to realize it, for they are extremely shy. They remain in flocks in the willow thickets. In the middle of the day they may be found dusting themselves on the sunny side of the river banks among the willows. Their tracks are everywhere. Although there is no snow on the ground, in many places there is a thick layer of hoar frost on the sand and grass, and tracks of any bird or animal are easily seen.

The days have grown very short now. We would have to light our candle by half-past four, and soon we would begin to yawn, and by six we would go to sleep, not to get up again until eight the next morning; and even then it is with reluctance, on account of the cold. The tent was easy to keep comfortably warm on the inside as long as the fire burned in the stove, but in an hour after the fire went out it was as cold inside as it was outside. Clyde and I slept on the hay with two pairs of blankets under us, and two pairs over us, and a large canvas sheet outside of the blankets well tucked in. And the blankets were no common ones. They were made for the Arctic trade, and were as thick as an ordinary comforter. And then we wore all our clothes. Each had on three pairs of heavy wool socks, a hood and mittens.

In the morning the edges of the blankets were faced with ice from our breath, and the inside of the tent sparkled with a beauty I cannot describe. It was fourteen degrees below zero the last morning, and the boys at home declared we got "frozen out," the reason we returned so soon. When they found out that we did not go even to the foot of the mountains, but had camped all that time in the willows just across the river, they ridiculed us unmercifully, especially the doctor. But I'll be even with him some bright Arctic day. He even insinuated that I went on that trip just to be able to cook as much mush as I wanted to eat. I will admit that mush was a very agreeable feature of the trip.

I really obtained what I went for — the chickadees. I have tramped with a burro (a California donkey), a canoe, and at last with a sled, and I must say that the sled is preferable when one has a level surface to travel over.

We had carried grub for two weeks, a 7 x 10 tent, camp stove and three lengths of pipe, four pairs of blankets, tent fly, sailor bag full of clothing, ax, hatchet, camera, two guns, traps, etc. I think I will make another trip soon if the weather remains clear.

Nov. 7.—A week ago Dr. Coffin, Clyde and Rivers, with a Dr. Gleaves of the Hanson Camp below us, started up the Kowak to visit the other section of our company about one hundred and fifty miles north, and to find out all the news of interest along the route. They walked, carrying food, abundant clothing, and camping tools, on a sled. They hope to make the round trip in three weeks. I had intended to make the trip with them, but have not yet put up all the birds in my possession, and must work on them. We are a small family now, only six. C. C. still cooks, and I am willing he should continue the good work. He makes pies and cakes almost "as good as mother used to make," and fine yeast bread.

A damp, raw east wind makes it bitterly cold to-day. At daylight this morning I went across the river to the willows for a couple of hours. It was six degrees below zero when I started, and I wore only a thin hood and mittens and a canvas jumper. By the time I got well across I felt nearly frozen, and as soon as possible I built a fire. My nose was frost-bitten before I knew it. I shot a ptarmigan and two redpolls before returning.

Chenetto, one of our native neighbors, trapped a big gray wolf, a white fox and a red fox last week. I have tried to trade for them, but the natives say they need them for clothing; and they very plainly do, for these are the poorest Indians we have met. I regret our opportunity for trading down at Cape Prince of Wales. We expected the same advantage in Kotzebue, but are disappointed. One or two of our company keep an eye on special bargains and appropriate them.

Last week a German called at every camp on the Kowak working up a "winter mail

route." He had skated up from the mouth of the river, and proposed to take letters down to Cape Blossom for one dollar each. A reindeer team is expected there from St. Michaels in December which will bring in or carry back any mail. He is called "The Flying Dutchman."

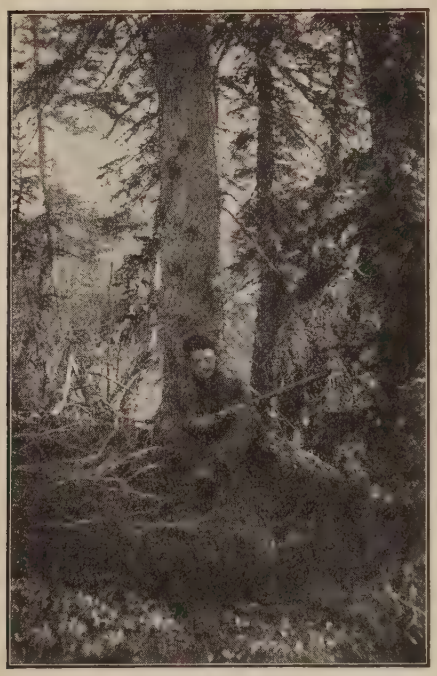
Another man from up the river came down yesterday on the same business, proposing further to take mail himself to St. Michaels. Some of our Iowa neighbors warned us of him as a possible "crook." He claims to have seven hundred letters promised at one dollar each. One meets all kinds of people in this desolate country, and even the face of a "crook" is not rare.

The "Flying Dutchman."

Schemers are trying various ways to get money. The gold proposition here is an entire failure so far, and the stories published are no better than "made up on purpose." It is supposed they were constructed by the transportation companies, and surely these have reaped a harvest this year. A thousand men are in winter quarters in the Kotzebue region, besides the many who went back the last thing in the fall. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were expended by parties coming here, and nothing is taken out; all of that money going to the transportation companies and merchants of San Francisco and Seattle. The H—— crowd alone, who are camped five miles below us, paid $31,000 for their outfit, including sailing vessel and river steamer. Part of this company got "cold feet" and went back, and the remainder have tons of provisions here to dispose of. They cannot get it into the interior to the Klondike regions, and so they will have to transport it all back down the river and so on to San Francisco, unless they can dispose of it on the way, which is not likely. It is strange how many fools were started to this country by bogus reports in the newspapers. Each party thought itself about the only one coming up here, and, what is most amusing, many of them had a "sure thing." Several parties whom we know of paid someone for a "tip" as to the exact place where the gold was waiting for the lucky man to pick it up. When they arrived at the Sound they rushed as soon as their feet could carry them, to take possession of their promised gold, only to find that they had been duped. They returned with righteous indignation burning in their bosoms, and to this day and for all time to come, justice is in hiding for the scoundrels, if they are found.

This country may possibly have gold in it, for I know that it has not been prospected as it should. Men pan out on a sand-bar of a river here and there and are discouraged at finding nothing. And moreover they will not do another stroke of work, but either return to the States, or camp somewhere waiting for "another man" to sink shafts and do what we know is real prospecting. I should not be surprised if three-fourths of the people on this river are idle, waiting for the others to dig. I know that our camp has done practically nothing, as may be seen from the reports which I have made, when I myself was supposed to be one of the prospectors. We are all equally guilty. It seems that people expected to find mines all ready to work, and, since none are visible, sit down and give it up. Our company, as well as many another, is something of a farce when it comes to being a "mining company." We are doing nothing. It seems that when the gold fever takes hold of a man it deprives him of a fair proportion of his reason. But it cannot be denied that we are getting experience. Who would not be a miner under such comfortable circumstances as ours? Meanwhile I am skining mice and chickadees. I am doing exactly what I want to do, and work here is original work of which I shall be glad in time to come. I would be nowhere else in the world than right here now. One cannot take a stroll in the Arctics every day. I am resolved to remain as long as I can and improve my opportunities. If the company disbands I shall stay with the missionaries. I do not know what this gold-hunting expedition came up here for unless to accommodate me, unintentionally of course. Everything delights me, from the hoar frost on my somewhat scanty though growing beard, to the ice-locked Kowak and its border of silver-laden spruces. And the ptarmigans! What beautiful birds! part and parcel in

color and endurance of this frozen world. And the winter is not half over. What rev-



In the Spruce Woods.

elations when spring knocks at the barred doors! How alert the awakening landscape I can as yet only partially realize.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOV. 12, 7 o'clock a. m.—Great excitement prevails. The "Flying Dutchman" returned down the Kowak last night. He is the German who passed on about twelve days ago to learn all the news and gather mail. He brings us good news, such news as makes the heart of a gold-hunter in the Arctics palpitate with emotion.

He met a man above the Par River, one hundred and seventy-five miles east of us, who had just come over from the head waters of the Koyukuk River to get a sled-load of provisions. This man reported that gold in large quantities had been found on a branch of the Koyukuk near the head of this river, and that he and others had staked out rich claims. The "Flying Dutchman" also reported that six of our boys from the upper Penelope Camp had already started with sleds for that region, and that Dr. Coffin had reached the Penelope Camp in safety and was now on his way back to give us the news. We expect his party to-night. This news, if true, changes the whole aspect of things. We have heretofore had no assurance that gold had been found in this country, and we believed ourselves to be the victims of "fake" stories. What a change of feeling in our camp! Although this report may also be a fake, we will enjoy these happy expectations until further developments. One thing is true, and that is that our boys above here have started a party to the head of the Koyukuk, and must have learned something favorable. When the doctor and the rest get back to-night we shall certainly know all about it.

It was just a day or two ago that I was writing a discouraging entry. So hope follows despair, and again despair may follow on the heels of hope, with gold-hunters.

We have two sleds now nearly finished, so that if the doctor confirms the news, we will be ready to start immediately for the Koyukuk in the teeth of an Arctic winter. Let it growl! What care gold-hunters for old Boreas? We are in high spirits. Last night we had what is denominated with us "a high old time." We yelled, and danced, and sang impromptu songs, such as the following, which needs the camp conditions to give it the true ring:

The Flying Dutchman came round the bend,
  Good-by, old Kowak, good-by;
Shouting the news to all the men,
  Good-by, old Kowak, good-by.
Gold is found on the Koyukuk,
The people here will be piechuck (Eskimo for "gone").
The "Penelope" gang have made a sleigh,
And part are *now* upon the way.
If you get there before I do,
Stake a claim there for me, too.
We'll start right now with spade and shovel,
And dig out gold to beat the devil.

This immortal song proves that we are a lively crowd. With the banjo and autoharp as accompaniment, we demonstrate a "good time" while we feel like it.

Meanwhile, until further news, we shall continue to get ready between the songs. Brown and I and the two Harrys are making a sled.

Last Sunday we had a good-sized congregation for morning "services." Twenty-five white men were present, but only a few natives. We were wondering why the Eskimos were not coming, and Harry Reynolds went up to the village to see. He found them all playing poker. Harry finally persuaded two men to come, after they had won all the stakes. The rest kept on playing. Natives who cannot speak a word of English — and very few can — know how to play cards, and can read the numbers in their own language and count up faster than we. They play for lead, cartridges, tobacco, etc., but the stakes are never very large, owing to their limited means. Yesterday our cabin was full of Eskimos all day.

A couple of young men got hold of our croconole board, starting in at ten in the morning and playing without a stop until ten at night. And they can play well, too; better than we can. We found that they were playing for tobacco, and that in the house of a half-way missionary outfit who have just completed a chapel for the regeneration of the natives! A previously-prepared quid of tobacco, which may have done service as the stake for other games in the past, was enjoyed by the winner of each game, until he in turn was defeated, when the quid reverted to the original winner, and so on back and forth all day.

The Indians seldom spit out the tobacco juice, but swallow it. They seem to have cast-iron stomachs. When they smoke, they draw the smoke into their lungs and retain it several seconds before exhaling. I have many times watched an Indian inhale a great puff of smoke, but I have never seen it return again. Whether they swallow it, as they seem to do, or what becomes of it, I do not know. The women and even little children all smoke. I saw a funny sight last summer down near the Mission, and only regret that the camera was not along. A little "kid" about four years old, without a stitch of clothing on, except an officer's old cap, was strutting around the camp with an immense corn-cob pipe in his mouth, and he knew how to smoke, too. The question is, where did he get the pipe?

At noon yesterday there were six or eight Eskimo men and one woman sitting around in the cabin, and as usual at mealtime C. C. gave them something to eat. Among the other viands were some beans and a bowl of gravy. This gravy had been made from the juice of fried bear meat, but it did not have a shred of the meat in it. C. C. passed around this varied mess in bowls to the natives. They began to eat with relish, when one of the men suddenly demanded of C. C. in a stern voice whether there was any bear in the "cow-cow" (food).

C. C. said at first there was not, but the

Native Visitors.

Indian tasted it again and looked suspiciously at C. C., who suddenly remembered the bear juice and admitted there was "a little." The woman at once threw down her food and the men fell to talking earnestly. They said that bear meat would kill a woman if she ate it, but it was perfectly safe for men. It is awful to think of; how we might have been held up for murder in that desolate land, and hung by a rawhide rope to the dome of the Arctic Circle. It is a fact that this woman died two weeks afterward. The natives hold many superstitions as to when and what to eat. No Indian woman was allowed to do any sewing in the village yesterday because there was a man very sick in one of the igloos. Should they dare to sew it might cause his death.

It is half-past seven now, and C. C. has got up and is starting the breakfast. It is beginning to be quite light outside and I will

go out and examine my traps before breakfast.

Sunday, Nov. 13.—The wind has blown from the north constantly for two days and is increasing. The doctor and the boys are not back either, so they must have stopped at some camp on the way down. They are wise to do that. I went out on the river awhile this evening, and could scarcely stand up against the wind. And the sand was blowing in clouds across the ice from the opposite side of the river. It has been at even zero all day. In spite of the bad weather there was a large attendance at church this morning, there being thirty-two white men present. There were two from "Ambler City," thirty-six miles up the Kowak, and two or three from the Jesse Lou Camp twelve miles below us, while nearly all the Hanson boys came up. Those from up the river came down on skates yesterday and spent the night at the Guardian Camp, four miles above us. They had seen nothing of the doctor and his party. Services were held in the new chapel for the first time. And it was a great success; the chapel, I mean. The room was comfortably filled and was quite warm. A great blazing fire in the stone fireplace on one side made it cheerfully warm, and a great square opening in the roof, covered with an almost transparent walrus gut skin, admitted plenty of light. The service consisted mainly of familiar hymns, accompanied by the orchestra. The orchestra consists of the autoharp, played by C. C., the clarionet by Lyman of the Iowa Camp, the banjo by Harry Reynolds, and the violin by Normandin of the Hanson Camp. The music is fine, too. It alone is a big attraction for men up in this country, as very few thought of bringing musical instruments. C. C. made a short talk, and so did Mr. Dozier of the Hanson Camp. After the regular service a social hour was spent. This was the first religious meeting since leaving the States, for several of the men. It is very nice, I think, to have these Sunday meetings, if only for the social enjoyment. Rumor has come to us by way of the Yukon and Koyukuk that the Spanish war is at an end, and that the Philippines and Cuba are free. How we would like to know the details! But alas! by the time we do get them they will be as stale as last year's gingerbread.

Entrance to Native Igloo.

Nine men accepted our invitation for dinner, and our house might be said to be full. C. C. had prepared for such an emergency, and a big roast of bear with stuffing, fried venison and pies without limit made a feast that everyone enjoyed. We are all "prodigal sons," the only difference being that we are having our "fatted calf" all the way along.

Two of the men declared that this was the first time they had eaten pie since leaving home. There is nothing like pie to bring a fellow to his home senses.

Those who have visited all the camps on the Kowak, say that ours is the largest and most comfortable house on the river. I think this is the case, but we are not the only ones who enjoy its comforts and hospitality.

I do not expect we shall have so large an attendance again at Sunday services, for to-morrow ten of the Iowa boys, our nearest neighbors, start with heavily loaded sleds to get as far as possible toward the Koyukuk before the snow comes. Others are talking of starting soon, and if more favorable news comes we may all skip out. I would not hesitate a moment to go now if we could be sure as to the snowfall. We have no snowshoes, and it would be disastrous to be snowed in for several months in some desolate place with limited provisions.

Yesterday I made a hood out of a canvas flour sack to be put on outside of my wool hood which mother knit, and it will keep out a good deal of wind. I also put a heavy canvas lining over my woolen mittens and darned several pairs of socks. That is the

first time I have done any mending since leaving home. Perhaps there is no time in a fellow's life when affectionate remembrance of his human sisters so comes to him as when his garments need repairing. Bless them! — the sisters and mothers, not the garments.

Last week an Indian brought in another bear, a larger one than the Hunt River bear, and we traded for a hind quarter, about forty pounds. The flesh is rather strong, but we eat it with relish. C. C. has the promise of the hide.

Yesterday there was great activity in sled building. Brown's sled is nearly done. Chenetto, a young Eskimo, worked for us most of the day lashing the pieces together. He is an expert. Luckily I traded for a large quantity of walrus-hide string at Cape Prince of Wales. It is about the only material strong enough to lash sleds together.

Last week we nearly all shaved our beards off, which greatly improves the looks of most of us. That was not the cause of their removal. The ice forms in one's moustache and beard in chunks, and is very disagreeable and inconvenient to carry about. C. C. had a specially fine beard and it became him. Mine was long on the chin with rather silky burnsides, and the boys then called me Si Pumpkins. I then shaved off my moustache and all but the long, straggling chin whiskers, and they called me Deacon Greentree. But now I am plain "Joe" again, and they tell me I shall never attempt another beard at risk of disgracing the camp. We have a pair of grocer's scales with our hundreds of other things, and weigh ourselves at times. My weight is 148 pounds as against 127 when I left home last April. This proves that a trip to the Arctics is favorable to health and avoirdupois.

By the way, I saw my first nuggets to-day. "Hard-luck Jim," one of the men from Ambler City, had three small gold nuggets. But they were not taken on the Kowak, alas! They came from Cook's Inlet.

The "Flying Dutchman" gave us a diagram of the Kowak River, with the camps and distances as he judged them when skating up the river. I will record them, beginning at Holtham Inlet. It may be years hence that some other prospecting parties will wend their way into these parts, and, seeing our deserted villages, pause in wonder at the lesson they teach. The first camp is forty miles from the mouth of the Kowak, the Buckeye Camp; then thirty-five miles and the Orphans' House; one-half mile and Sproud's Camp; nine miles, Riley Wreck; nine miles, Falkenberg Camp; one mile, Lower Kotzebue Camp; twelve miles, Indian Camp; twenty miles, Jesse Lou Camp; twelve miles, Sunnyside; one-half mile, Lower Hanson Camp; three miles, Lower Penelope Camp (our own) and Lower Iowa Camp; four miles, Guardian Camp; thirty

The Leaning Tree that Marked our Camp.

miles, Ambler City; three miles, Upper Hanson Camp; fifty miles, Mulkey's Landing; four miles, Camp Riley; four miles, Agnes Boyd Camp; ten miles, Upper Iowa Camp; two miles, Kogoluktuk River, on which, about six miles from the mouth, are the Upper Penelope Camp (our boys) and river boat "Helen"; ten miles, Stony Camp; one and one-half miles, Upper Kotzebue Camp and Kate Sudden gulch; three miles, Farnsworth Camp; three miles, Nugget Camp; eight miles, Upper Guardian Camp; five miles, Davenport Camp; five miles, Leslie D. Camp; eight miles, Ralston Camp; two miles, Par River, Captain Green's Camp. From this point there are camps on to the Reed River, seventy-five miles further up the

Kowak, but the "Flying Dutchman" did not go farther than the Par River. He reports eight hundred men in winter quarters on the Kowak alone. Thus is this desolate Kowak country peopled with expectant gold seekers, where a year ago a white man's track in the snow was a thing unknown. And what will be the result? Time alone, with the assistance of my note-book, shall record it. And here come the boys, but the doctor's face is not jubilant.

CHAPTER IX.

NOV. 15, 1898.—The boys returned last night very weary. They gave us the news much as the "Flying Dutchman" had. Six of our Upper Penelope boys have started for the Koyukuk with four months' provisions. They are Miller, Foots, Alec, Stevenson, Shafer and Casey. They carry eighteen hundred pounds on two sleds, three men to each sled. Shaul has gone to the Pick River, where "good indications" are reported. That leaves Wilson, McCullough and Farrar at the Upper Camp. Dr. Coffin has little faith in the news. He fears it is an unfounded rumor like many another. Moreover our doctor thinks it foolhardy and dangerous to start on such a trip, and he is anxious about the boys who have gone. None of them have had any experience with cold weather, being California boys. Casey, in fact, was never outside of Los Angeles county, until this trip, and none of the crowd are dressed for severe weather. They have but little fur clothing. However, timber covers most of the country they will cross, and they will, of course, put up a cabin if necessary. You couldn't entice the doctor out on such a trip for all the gold in Alaska. It ranged down to thirty-five degrees below zero while he and the boys were out, and they camped several nights, although at all the camps on the river hospitality reigned. The doctor had one finger frozen. He says he did not suspect it was nipped until he warmed his hands over the camp fire. It is very easy to be frozen without knowing it, even with the thermometer only thirty-five degrees below. But what about sixty below zero?

Starting for the Koyukuk.

News has come to us that hundreds of other men are waiting to get to Kotzebue at the earliest possible moment. The gold-hunters up the river are mostly doing nothing, waiting for spring to open so they can go home. A few are sinking shafts in favorable localities, but as yet without success, though there are some "indications," whatever these are. It is a great undertaking to dig a hole in frozen ground. Fires are built and kept burning for some time and then removed, and the thawed dirt and gravel taken out. This process is repeated again and again, and the result is dreadfully slow. Frozen ground is tougher than rock to dig in. McCullough, Wilson and Farrar are starting such a hole at their camp.

Our enthusiasm about the new strike on the Koyukuk is subsiding. We sing no more impromptu songs. But we have six men in that direction, and if they are fortunate enough to get through they will send two men back for provisions.

Meanwhile I am collecting chickadees and redpolls. A couple or three of our leading men, who shall be nameless in this connection, are homesick. Yes, blue. They will be seen in Southern California as soon as they can crawl out of the Kowak country on their

hands and knees. Now, watch and see who they are.

Three of our neighbors started up the river yesterday with a load of eleven hundred pounds on a sled. They started on the smooth ice all right, but five miles north the sand has covered the ice clear across the river. They were stuck there and, after struggling over the sand for a few hours, gave it up and returned. The Iowa boys have not started yet, but are spending more time in making good sleds and fixing skates on their runners. If they start at all, which I doubt, they will certainly have better success than others. Dr. Coffin declares he is going to stay by and in our good, warm cabin the rest of the winter. He is quite pessimistic to-night. He predicts much suffering this winter. He found in his recent travels that open fireplaces are a failure. Cabins heated by them are cold. There is too much draft and the temperature cools off quickly when the fire dies down. We have two stoves, and water never freezes over in the cabin.

Nov. 18.—We just had a dreadful catastrophe. C. C. had set his keg of yeast on the rafters above the stove to keep warm and do its "work." Harry Reynolds had some poles near by across the rafters. The latter gentleman is at work on his new sled and, requiring one of the poles, reached for it rather hastily. As a result the yeast keg turned over. The doctor was sitting beneath, calmly reading some good book, when nearly the entire contents, a gallon of sour yeast, poured on to his unprotected head and down his neck, and spread itself out as if to shield him from any other danger. What a sight, it is impossible for me to portray. Not content with deluging the poor medico, the stuff slopped over everything in the vicinity of two or three yards. Several of us had a dose, but none was so seriously affected as the doctor, who is even now at work on his clothes with warm water and a sponge. The smell of sour dough permeates the atmosphere. Brown remarks that it reminds him of the extremely sour odor which filled the cabin of the "Penelope" the first night out from San Francisco.

For my part I think it convenient to have these little interruptions — when they fall on another man's head. It livens things up.

One or two other events have served to liven us up. Last night one of the natives at the Indian village died. It was what we expected, for he has been very sick for a week with pneumonia. This morning at daylight we noticed a smoke across the river and I walked over to investigate the cause. I regretted finding the obsequies closed and the four natives who had officiated just leaving. They had taken the dead man and all his personal belongings over to the bank of the river opposite the village, to a little knoll, where they built a platform on some poles leaned against each other for support. The body was wrapped in tent cloth and laid on this platform, which was about five feet above the ground — as high as the men could conveniently reach. After this the whole was firmly lashed together with walrus thong, so the winds and the dogs cannot tear it down. By the side of the scaffold the

Scaffold Burial.

dead man's sled was laid upside down, and hung on the willows around were all the personal belongings of the deceased. He was "well-to-do," and these amounted to considerable as the Eskimos valued them. There were two nice reindeer skins, his clothes, mittens, muckluks, handkerchief, tin cup, etc. It seemed too bad to see those two deerskins left to decay in the weather, when the dead man's relatives are in sore need, but this is the invariable custom of these people. No worse than what occurs among Christians, when all available and unavailable funds are used to defray the expenses of an ostentatious funeral, leaving the family in destitution.

Joe Jury and Jack Messing, two of the Hanson Camp boys, spent the day with us and we had a big dinner. This "having company" disturbs the monotony of so much "prospecting," as we are doing these days.

Nov. 20, Sunday, 6 p. m.—To-day has been a very enjoyable one at this camp on the

Kowak. In fact every day is. The Hanson boys were all up for Sunday services. There were also two men from the Jesse Lou Camp, fifteen miles below us, who are visiting the Hanson Camp. The latter have invited our whole crowd down for Thanksgiving dinner next Thursday. We look forward to a "big spread," for this camp is abundantly supplied with luxuries in the food line, as I can testify, having taken dinner with them twice already. They are well-to-do, educated men, full of spontaneous hilarity, and a great boon to the Penelope Camp. Solsbury is a correspondent of the San Jose "Mercury." He is a lawyer and of course a good talker. He tells stories by the hour.

This afternoon he got started from some cause—a predetermined one, I presume—and talked for two hours. He resembles the newspaper cuts of Mark Twain. It is very entertaining when he tells of his experience in lumbering in the Sierras. His own boys say that he talks so incessantly that they beg him to quit before they get tired of his wit or confiscate it entirely. Everyone grows tiresome to his fellows on a trip like this; it could not be otherwise. Constant association for months brings out a man's faults and traits of character so plainly that those which are of little note glare like tiger's eyes in the dark, and his company becomes disagreeable, living as we do in a little cabin, and looking in each other's faces if we take a stroll, to keep watch for frost bites. It is better to be in a large company than in a small crowd, so one can vary his personal reflections.

Jack Messing is a man one likes to meet. He is a German by birth and the most generous of men by nature. His great fault is generosity, a vice seldom met with in my remembrance, and the boys make him the butt of dozens of jokes. He would give away the last stitch of clothing he owns should a man ask him. He gives the Eskimos all sorts of things and feeds them whenever he can, which is all the time, for these natives know a friend and are faithful to him. He has previously worn a full beard, but to-day he stalked into church with his face shaven clean excepting a long fringe of whiskers left in a circle from ear to ear around under his chin. He wore a belt and pistol, and had a big tin star on his left coat lapel and carried a "she-la-ly." He looked exactly like an Irish policeman, only with the usual recognized attributes of the latter highly accentuated. He stated in Irish dialect that he was after the thief who had stolen a pail of water from a certain camp down the river. As this allusion was in reference to a well-known occurrence of a week ago, it was very disastrous to the serious feeling which should prevail at a religious meeting, and it was some time before the congregation could settle down to the business in hand.

This afternoon we had a regular concert. The violin, autoharp and banjo make fine harmony in this noiseless atmosphere, and we were soon expressing our feelings in jumping and dancing. Two pairs of bones rattled to such of the music as was appropriate, and it was no dull time in the Penelope Camp. Clyde took the pictures of the crowd. I say this afternoon, but I mean to-day; it is light for only about six hours, and at high noon the sun scarcely peeps above the hills to the southward. It appears to be sundown at noon, and the colors of sky and landscape are beautiful.

We have had our first snow, only an inch, but enough to whiten the landscape until the next wind, that is booked for a circus, whisks it all into the hollows and then covers it up with sand, giving it a sharp rap and bidding it "stay there."

This morning we saw a very beautiful mirage. The mountains and trees down the river from us were reflected in the sky above, upside down. Then for another fine display we have the aurora. Last night it appeared in the form of a great bow reaching nearly to the zenith. It consisted of many colored scintillating rays, which brightened and then almost disappeared, only to reappear in different form as if they had left the stage to change their costume. The aurora appears in different form each night. And there is the beautiful moonlight. The moon is above the horizon always now. It reverses the order of the sun and shines all day in winter, scarcely appearing in summer.

How the time flies, to me at least! Before we know it, Spring will tap at the door. The unbearable monotony of an Arctic winter, which some travelers dwell upon so desolately, is unknown to us so far, and I for one will never know it. During the past few weeks I have read. So far have devoured "Last Days of Pompeii," "In His Steps," "Opening of a Chestnut Burr," "The Honorable Peter Sterling," and "Etidorpha." I spent two weeks upon the latter and think it is a wonderful book, coming upon my thoughts here in the Arctics like a great semi-scientific visitor. There are more

books in the neighborhood than I could read in two winters.

I have been given a new name — "Chickadee Joe." At the Hanson Camp they call me "Little Joe," to distinguish me from "Big Joe." We are very familiar with one another and change very suddenly from a highly intellectual crowd to one of stirring juvenility. We had such an unexpected romp the other day. There was about an inch of snow out on the smooth ice, and it was snowing great flakes still. Three of

After the Ball.

our boys were playing snowball with several of the Eskimo children, and washing each other's faces and slipping down all over the ice. Two Eskimo "belles" joined us, Kalhak and Aggi-chuck, and they did not hesitate to give us a return snowball or a face full of the same. They were strong, too, and several times I found myself sprawling on the ice and covered with snow, to the great amusement of everyone. After all that may be said of this strange people, they derive a sort of very human satisfaction from their cold and narrow life, and I shall always think of them as finding some happiness in the long winter along with the aurora and the moonlight.

CHAPTER X.

NOV. 25.—To-day we are resting and slowly recovering from yesterday's "spree." It was the most gratifying Thanksgiving, as far as the gastronomic and social celebrations are considered, that I have experienced. At eleven o'clock in the morning our "Penelope" crowd of nine were marshaled into line out on the ice, and marched three miles down to the Hanson Camp. Harry Reynolds was elected captain, and he bore a streamer of red, white and blue. We were all dressed exactly alike in our brown Mackinaw suits, sealskin muckluks and hoods. Our appearance was picturesque, and we regretted that there were so few spectators to review us. We admired ourselves. When we reached the first of the Hanson cabins, which are built within a short distance of each other in a spruce forest on a hillside, we lined up and sang "Marching Through Georgia" and other patriotic airs. We have only recently heard of the defeat of Spain, so were necessarily in harmony with the songs we sang.

After breaking ranks we were divided among the cabins for the day's entertainment. Cabin No. 1 is occupied by Joe Jury, Normandin, Jack Messing and Solsbury, and these gentlemen invited C. C. Reynolds, Clyde Baldwin, Rivers and myself. We felt the honor of our invitation, for they had been before styled the "Aristocracy of the Kowak."

After the "Penelope" crowd was apportioned, each division became the guests of the cabin to which it was assigned. Until about three o'clock our company sat quietly engaged in conversation. Meanwhile one could scarcely believe that a state dinner was in process of preparation, and that in the same room in which we were sitting. Solsbury was cook, and what appeared at his touch was marvelous, considering that the cabin was short on culinary utensils and he must "potter" over a little sheet-iron stove.

At three o'clock the table was ready and we sat down to it, eight of us. We were seated opposite our hosts — Rivers opposite Solsbury; C. C., Normandin; Clyde, Jack Messing; and I opposite Joe Jury (Big Joe and Little Joe), in the order named. At each plate was an "Arctictically" executed menu—a section of birch, one of the logs of our hosts' cabin; thus literally were we the guests of the house. This in itself was a very appropriate memento of Thanksgiving on the Kowak.

On one side of the plaque was written indelibly the menu. In one corner was a sketch of the cabin. On the opposite we later wrote our names, alternately, in order as we sat at table. Here is a partial statement of the menu:

Split pea soup. Wafers.
Roast ptarmigan. Jelly.
Turkey potpie.
Sweet potato. Baked potato. Sweet corn.
Sago pudding.
Mince pie. Jelly tarts. Olives. Pickles.
Coffee. Cocoa.

This spread was one hardly to be expected in the wilds of the Arctics; though, as I have said, the Hanson Camp is never lacking

Our Big Haul of Ptarmigan.

in luxuries. Toward the end toasts were proposed and speeches made. My toast was to the ptarmigan, "The Turkey of the Kowak."

We were two hours and a half at the table, and I hesitate to say that some of us, myself included, had eaten more than was for our intellectual good, and we were glad to throw ourselves on the beds which bordered the dining-room. For the next two hours we rested and gradually revived. Meanwhile our hosts entertained us in original style. One of the jokes was as follows: A pot was set in one corner and in it was placed a small spruce branch. Then Joe Jury sat down behind this combination and picked a tune from a string which was stretched on a small wooden block. The translation of this performance, as we were informed, was, "After dinner the orchestra dispensed sweet music from behind potted plants." After we had enjoyed hours of fun, all the guests were summoned from all the cabins and crowded into ours. Several speeches followed, by Solsbury, Dr. Coffin, C. C. Reynolds, Jury, Normandin and others. Then came more jokes.

At last the party broke up, and, after three cheers for the Hanson boys, we marched home in the bright Arctic moonlight, in the order we had come. Thus ended the first Thanksgiving ever celebrated on the mighty Kowak. On our return home we found the house had not been burglarized — another proof that we were not in the limits of civilization.

And here we are, spending the winter in ease and luxury, while our friends at home are "remembering us in their prayers," and imagining us in all sorts of peril, with danger of overwork, amid privation and hardship. The fact is, we haven't done a stroke of work worth mentioning, when we had expected to be digging out the precious nuggets. In which condition are we the happier or best off? I prefer the situation as it is. What is gold anyway? It is the "root of all evil," according to a misquotation, and, conversely, I believe the less money a person has, the happier life he leads. Anyway it is good policy for us to advance this doctrine until we strike something. It tends to keep us content.

Nov. 28.—The doctor and I have been out hunting. We directed our course down through the sand-dunes on this side of the river, and had the best luck so far with the ptarmigan. We got eighteen with twenty-four shots, which beats all records, as the birds are shy and, on account of their thick coat, extremely hard to kill. We stalked them among the hillocks, finding them feeding in the grass or in the thickets of dwarf willows which grow in the low places. We kept together and when we had spotted a flock we crept up behind the nearest dune, often getting quite close before alarming them. I got three at one pot-shot. They are hard to see on the snow, but where the sand is bare or with a background of bushes they are conspicuous. I had one vexatious accident. We spotted some birds on the opposite side of the lake and crept around the margin on the ice, hidden by bushes until we were within a few yards. I had two ptarmagin beautifully lined up and was just pushing the trigger, when my feet slipped from under me and my gun went off into the air. Before I could recover myself the ptarmigan were also up in the air. The ice is very slippery where the snow is blown off, as the sand driven over it by the north

wind keeps it polished and prevents the hoar frost from forming on it. The doctor found a muskrat frozen to death near its hole. It fell to my mammal collection. I also caught a gray meadow mouse alive, as it was crossing a little pond. It is but my second. The burrows and runways of the little red-backed mouse are common in the woods and meadows. My steel traps have caught nothing but jays so far. I am sorry to catch the jays, for I do not disturb them near home, hoping to get their eggs next spring. I shall have ptarmigan to skin for several days now and so make recompense for my recent idleness. I can only work by daylight, which lasts but about three hours now, —that is, light enough for me to work at my table. The sun scarcely climbed above the horizon to-day. Clyde took the doctor's and my photos to-day with our big haul of ptarmigan.

Yesterday there was a fair attendance at church. Services were held in our cabin, as the meeting-house fireplace fell in. It will probably not be used again soon, as it is too cold to mix clay to mend the breach. Twenty-nine degrees below zero, and one has to be careful to keep ears and hands covered.

"Uncle Jimmy" (Mr. Wyse) gave me a fatherly talking to for skinning ptarmigan on Sunday. Hitherto I have used any time available for skinning birds, but yesterday, after a long argument and discussion, I yielded for the winter. Uncle Jimmy argued that I couldn't fill in all the time there is on week-days, and even if I don't see a reason for not working on Sunday, I should "consider the feelings of those who do." He is a nice old Scotchman, and I like him.

I have just finished reading "Hugh Wynne." The doctor brought home some numbers of "Appleton's Science Monthly" from the Hanson Camp, also some back numbers of "Harper's," and I am reading articles in them.

The doctor, Brownie, Uncle Jimmy and I had a hot argument to-day on capital punishment, also one on "how a young student should begin to specialize in any branch of study." I always take the side opposite the majority, so I can have more opportunity for argument. We have good and instructive times in this employment. Wednesday evening next is the first of a series of literary entertainments to be held weekly. Solsbury will lecture on "The Practical Value of Art."

Dec. 3.—This morning Harry Cox and Harry Reynolds started with Indian Tom up the Kowak. Tom was our guide on our first steamer trip across Holtham Inlet last summer, and he has been camping in the delta until now. He is on his way to the Par River, where his winter igloo is located. The Harrys took advantage of company to go along with Tom. They took a sled and two dogs, with just enough outfit to supply them on the trip. Their object is to visit the various camps up the river and find out all the news, especially in regard to the strike at the head of the Koyukuk. An Indian by the name of Shackle-belly visited us yesterday. He has just come down from the Kalamute River, about one hundred and fifty miles above us, and brings exciting news. He speaks pretty good English for a native. He said that he had heard that on the Alashook white men were as thick as mosquitoes and digging out "plenty gold." These men had come up the Koyukuk last summer from the Yukon with lots of steam launches. They could not get further up than one hundred and fifty miles below the place where the gold is found on the Alashook River, on account of the rapids, so they had to wait and sled up. Shackle-belly also

Indian Tom and Family.

said that most of the men above us on the Kowak had already started over.

It will be very dangerous for these men now at twenty-nine degrees below zero, and it must grow much colder with more wind, up on those barren mountain passes between the heads of the Kowak and Alashook. The Indian said one man had already frozen to death on the trail this side, and one had fallen through a hole in the ice, getting out all right, but before he could build a fire he

had frozen through. Several are frostbitten. We are anxious about our six boys who started from the Upper Penelope Camp over three weeks ago. However, if they met with no accidents, they must be over into the valley of the Alashook by this time, where the natives tell us there is plenty of large timber. Tom tells us that seven Indians have died down the river, and that white men are very sick. Tom has his family with him and of course all his belongings, which seldom amount to much, according to our estimation of values, among these natives. He has two sleds and six dogs. He and his family spent the night with us. We spread tents for them on the floor. We have

Windings of Squirrel River.

not been affected with vermin so far, and take precautions.

Last Wednesday was the first evening of the proposed literary society. Solsbury was to have been the lecturer of the night, but was sick and couldn't come. However, the society elected officers — Joseph Grinnell as president, and Dr. Coffin secretary. Then the doctor conducted a question box. Some of the questions asked and written on slips of paper, with the name of the man who was to answer, were very serious; others were humorous.

By the way, I must record a new pie which has fallen to the lot of the Penelope Camp. C. C. makes dozens of pie. We have pie every meal and between meals, and if a fellow gets hungry in the night when the rest are snoring, there is pie for his satisfaction. An old Eskimo woman from the village brought C. C. a pail of what she considered a rare delicacy, a gift expressive of her motherly consideration. It was a concoction of wild cranberries and seal oil.

It was suggestive to the natural bent of the cook's mind, and he made a pie of the stuff. We ate every bit of it — that is, three of us did; the rest wouldn't touch it. I ate my share, and must say that if you overlook the strong seal flavor, it would not be considered bad. I learned to eat cranberry done in oil when I was near Sitka three years ago. It is too extravagant a dish to be eaten every day, and the natives keep it, American-wise, "for company."

Last Tuesday the wind blew a gale at seventeen degrees below zero, and I thought I would see what I could stand. I wear now a union suit of fleece-lined underwear, a pair of blanket-lined canvas trousers, and a heavy wool shirt, with a pair of thin wool socks and a pair of lumberman's socks inside my muckluks. I put on a leather corduroy coat and my heavy wool hood, with a scarf around my neck and across my face. I was gone, down among the sand dunes, about an hour and a half. The wind had an unmolested sweep there and I had good opportunity to test my clothes. It did not penetrate my clothing a particle, and I was perfectly warm all except my face. The wind pierced like a sword right through my scarf and wool hood. When I got home the lobe of my left ear was frostbitten and also the same side of my nose. Both sections of my countenance are now very sore and are peeling off. I should have worn a canvas hood outside of my wool hood. Canvas keeps the wind out better than anything else. Furs are the best clothing in this country, but are very scarce among these poor Indians, and but few of our company have any. Again we regret not having traded for furs at Cape Prince of Wales. But we do not suffer by any means. We have clothing enough to last for years. We are not so fortunate in the provision line. However, should we strike it rich enough, lying around in our warm cabin, to make it pay another winter, it will be an easy matter to send the "Penelope" back to San Francisco for another load. The "Penelope"! What will be her fate when the ice breaks up in the spring no one can foretell. At the mercy of the unlimited and savage ice of Bering Sea, a frail little craft, no longer than the frontage of a city lot. We

do not think or speak of the "Penelope" very often. We may be orphans in the spring.

CHAPTER XI.

DEC. 8.—The beautiful snow has come at last and to-day it is six inches deep on the level. The trees are loaded and the river and meadows are painfully white. We must get out our snow-glasses, of which we have an abundance for all. Our condition seems to resemble that of the Swiss Family Robinson. We find everything we desire in our cabin, if not in our "wreck." We have no wreck. The north wind has been blowing a gale for days, which at last amounted to a blizzard. I went across the river in the teeth of the wind, just crawling along on the slippery ice, but the fun was in coming back. I had but to keep my balance and the wind did the rest.

We have been having some strange experiences with the Eskimos the past week, which has introduced us to more of their interesting superstitions.

Sunday evening, while we were all engaged in reading, or quiet talk, we were suddenly startled by a loud groaning outside. As the gruesome sound grew nearer we scarcely knew what to expect, but were prepared to give relief to sick or wounded human beings of whatever type. We rushed to the door, to find Charley, the Indian medicine man from the native village above. We thought at first that he was but practicing his arts, but when he was brought in groaning and sobbing we realized that he was really very sick, and the doctor pronounced it pneumonia. Soon Charley's family followed, and one of the little children was nearly frozen. The wind was blowing a gale, and Charley told us that he had come down from his igloo, four miles.

A few days before one of his wives had died, she who had eaten the bear gravy, and, according to Indian superstition that a person who lives in a house after another has died in it will surely die himself, he had moved out of his warm dugout into a tent. Of course it was very cold in the tent, and Sunday morning one of his little girls died as the result of exposure. So Charley could no longer live in either the tent or the igloo, and he was thrown out into the pitiless storm with his other wife and three remaining children. They went to a neighboring igloo, but a native would as soon commit suicide as shelter any of the family of the deceased in his house or enter the house where one has died. As a last resort Charley came to our cabin, and no doubt the whole family would have died but for this.

Of course we warmed and fed all of them, and the doctor attended upon Charley, who was too sick to object to another medicine man's treatment. Several of us then went over to the church cabin and, by stopping the fireplace and putting up a camp stove, we made it a comfortable hospital. Charley is there now. Not a single Indian has been inside our cabin since Charley was here.

Indian Charley and Family.

They say if they come in they will surely "mucky" (die). We are very glad they have taken this course, as heretofore they have been too numerous altogether. It would be to our advantage to keep one sick man with us. We have tried to induce a couple of young men to cut wood for Charley, but they declare that also is dangerous. Charley's wife dare not touch an axe for the same reason, so we have to chop their wood ourselves. Wonder if we will any of us be alive in the spring after such dangers. None of the Indians give them any food, so we are attending to that matter. We are doing our best to get them to overcome these

inhuman and exasperating superstitions. They can plainly see that we do not hesitate to care for the sick or the dead.

Tuesday night the patient was so sick the doctor thought he could not live without especial care, so we decided to watch with him. Rivers and I stayed with him from one to five o'clock in the early morning. And it was an odd experience. We had Charley bolstered up on two benches placed side by side near the stove. We kept a hot water bag on his chest and occasionally made him take ptarmigan broth with soaked hardtack. Poor fellow! had he been fed on such a diet while well and able to appreciate it, he might well have been surprised. But he was too near death to appreciate what we were doing. He would have spasms of coughing and loud groaning, catching his breath and rolling his eyes. Then he would fall back with his head lying limply over his shoulder, breathing short and with scarcely perceptible pulse. We thought he was about to die, but the climax passed and he revived. While we were taking care of him his wife slept, for she had probably been without rest for days. She now waits on him and is very attentive to his wants, and does the best she knows how, being generally more intelligent than most of the women. They all have little ingenuity in caring for the sick, and this is one reason why they die. Could these natives be persuaded to have a few of their women educated as nurses, how much less would be the winter mortality! Had we time we could do this, but it would take years, and women beside. We have no women. But here are.

A Funeral Cortege.

or will be, all the abandoned cabins on the Kowak by spring. What an opening for the mission-inclined! Free hospitals and free beds such as they are. And they are not mean. There are chairs, too, and carpeted floors.

In the meantime Charley's dead child, as we supposed, had been sole tenant of the igloo which had been vacated. This fact gave a sudden joy to C. C., the undertaker. As if by instinct he scented a resurrection of his neglected business, and it was with little difficulty that he persuaded Charley to let him give it a Christian burial. C. C. and Joe Jury went up to see about it, and found that the ceremonies had already been performed and the corpse was resting on one of the usual scaffolds near the igloo. This did not matter. They made a coffin of boards, sawed at our mill, and brought the corpse down to Penelope Camp, Jury as coroner and C. C. as funeral director. The hearse was a sled and the black horses a couple of dogs. Of course Charley was too sick to attend the funeral services, but his woman came and watched proceedings. She objected to nothing in any way when told that was the way white men buried their dead. But she insisted on putting some dishes and half a sack of flour in the grave before it was filled. The flour C. C. had brought down from the igloo, intending it for the family to eat. But they couldn't think of consigning a dead child to the unknown future without supplying it with sufficient means of support until it should reach its uncertain destination. So twenty-five pounds of good flour was interred with the coffin. C. C. intended this burial to teach the natives better methods than their own superstitious ways, but I for one doubt the propriety of burial in the ground in this country, as in summer the earth is saturated and covered with water, and in winter it is frozen to granite. As it turned out, the funeral was not a very extraordinary object lesson, for not a single Eskimo attended, save the woman mentioned, though they were especially asked to come. I am not sure that the funeral director was not guilty of making a "grave" mistake in the closing ceremonies.

He had just been assuring the woman mourner that the dead would need no further food or clothing in the "beyond" where she had now gone, when it occurred to him that a simple demonstration of sorrowful affection might be appropriate. Just before filling the grave he had all the bystanders (gold-hunters on the Kowak) throw in each a spruce bough, and the woman did likewise. I suppose he chose the spruce in place of impossible flowers, but the solitary mourner must have considered the act an inconsistent one after the remarks which had been made.

The doctor and I felt some uneasiness as to a special feature of the funeral and accordingly acted. Now I have no doubt my friend was no stranger to the scheme, but I was; nevertheless I went about my duty with the approval of my immature conscience. We went out as if to take a stroll, as was our frequent custom, and dug into the grave, removing the buried sack of flour. We very carefully filled in the grave and left all as it had been before. The snow which was falling at the time soon covered our footprints (whereupon might be written a poem), and no Eskimo will ever suspect our subtle deed. We put the flour into a new clean sack and presented it to Charley as a mutual gift. This was Kowak philanthrophy, though, if the natives had found us out, we might have had to suffer. The doctor and I congratulate ourselves on doing a real good deed in a naughty world.

Yesterday Charley's father came down from the village to pay his son a visit, but he evidently did not intend to enter the cabin, carrying on his conversation from without, very much as white folks do in cases of scarlet fever or other infectious disease. Some of us happened to be near by chopping wood, and we tried to induce him to go in. Finally the woman came out and built a fire, putting on green spruce twigs to make a dense smoke. The old man then stooped over the smudge, spreading a blanket over and around himself, thus confining the smoke about his body for several minutes. He then apparently considered himself immune from any evil and went into the cabin without further hesitation. This process of disinfection is certainly reasonable, only it was applied at the wrong end of affairs. He is a very old man and of no help about the patient, so we have an added charge.

Dec. 12, Monday.—I shot three redpolls this morning over in the willows. I then tried to utilize our brief stint of daylight to skin them by, but was obliged to resort to the dim light of a candle after all. We get no more sunshine here in the valley. At noon only the snowy mountain peaks are illuminated by straggling rays from the truant sun. The landscape is often magnificent. I stood on the bank several minutes at noon admiring the views. The northern horizon was deep blue, and, contrasted with it, were the snow-covered ranges, which were tinged a rich pink. The sky above was slightly overcast, as if covered by a delicate pink veil. Dark purple shadows crossed the zenith, but toward the sun all was bright yellow and gold. The snow-covered river and meadows beyond were so white that they seemed to have a blue tint. Then the spruce forests with their ragged outlines looked dark and gloomy as they were sketched against the mountains or horizon. I never imagined such color effects as are displayed every day here. I do not think that the brightest colors on an artist's palette could exaggerate the brilliant hues of the sky during our short period of twilight. We are looking for a tenant for our cabin. Let some club of artists engage it for a season and they will be in ecstasy.

A change in the weather! This morning a southeast wind sprang up and sent the thermometer to twenty-three degrees above zero. At this hour yesterday it was thirty-four degrees below. Although nine degrees below freezing, the air feels balmy as it strikes our faces. This is the first day in two months that I have taken a walk across the river in an ordinary hat. I could not go far, as the snow is badly drifted now. I saw a few redpolls and one raven. Rivers and Uncle Jimmy dug a new water-hole to-day. The ice is three and one-half feet thick.

In the cabin all is quiet as I write. The only light is my little candle on the dining-table. Uncle Jimmy is asleep, with his head on his crossed hands, on the opposite side of the table. C. C. is sitting in an arm-chair at the further end of the room probably thinking of home. Brownie and Clyde went over to one of the Iowa camps a few hours ago. Some of the boys are restless and delight in visiting.

Dr. Coffin got word from Dr Gleaves to go down to the Hanson Camp. A man on his way up the river from one of the lower camps has frozen his toes, and they are in such a condition that amputation is necessary. Dr. Coffin wanted me to go with him

to assist, thinking me cool and nervy, but I declined. If they were nice, fresh, sound members, nothing would delight me better than to render assistance, but I have a repugnance to dead, decaying flesh. For this and other reasons I never would skin a bird that had died of itself, though I saw it fly against a telegraph wire.

I am studying hard. I am at work on my physiology, and also committing to memory a "Glossary of Scientific Terms." The boys ridicule me for reading the dictionary so much, saying that the subject is changed too often to make it profitable reading. I am also teaching German to Rivers and Brownie. They are a very willing class. Other times I am studying bacteriology with the doctor. We are a literary and scientific crowd. Our latest argument last night was "How to Dispose of the City Slums." The doctor reads portions of Josiah Strong's "New Era" to us and then we discuss it. The Literary Society of the Kowak met Wednesday evening with a good attendance. "The Practical Value of Art" was thoroughly expounded by Solsbury of the Hanson Camp, though he required two hours to do it and some of the art-less ones grew sleepy.

Native Family at Home.

Indian Charley is nearly well now, and, like a white man in such circumstances, is appreciative of all we have done for him. He assures us that his woman shall sew for us, and that he himself will bring us fish when the spring opens. We hope he will continue in a thankful frame of mind. Another native died at the Hanson Camp of pneumonia. Dr. Gleaves kept him in his own cabin for days but failed to restore him, as the man was too far gone when he saw him. The relatives of the dead man had heard how C. C. buried Charley's little girl in a box, and insisted that they, too, have a "calboona" (white man's burial). Again was our undertaker alert and in his "native element," so to speak, and superintended the making of a coffin, and the various other incidentals of the funeral. The friends of the deceased brought a large number of articles, including a new gun, spy-glasses, parkas, skins, etc., to be interred with the body, but were finally dissuaded from thus destroying everything, save the dead man's pipe and tobacco pouch. These they believed he could by no means get along without in the next world. Before the Indian died he begged several times of Dr. Gleaves to kill him with a knife, and thus aid him in parting from his own misery. We are assured that the native medicine men sometimes do this, and at first glance there seems a humane side to the argument. On second thought, however, it is clear that the duty of a physician is to allay suffering, while life is naturally prolonged, leaving it to some other One to name the date of release. We hear of a woman sick at the village. Surely the Eskimos will soon be a race of the past unless civilization comes to their aid.

Dec. 19.—It has blown a gale for six days and we have scarcely been out of the house in that time. The bright, warm cabin is preferable. We only hear the roar of the wind outside, and occasionally from the corners comes a cold draught of air dumbly whistling through the moss-crowded chinks. The two Harrys got back Wednesday night after a very hard trip. They only got twenty miles beyond Ambler City before they were caught by the snow, which shortly was more than a foot in depth and they could not travel. Harry R. induced a severe attack of rheumatism and could walk only with difficulty. He came near freezing to death. He wanted to lie down and sleep, and Cox had all he could do to force

him on until they reached a cabin. Harry R. must have suffered terribly, for he is as thin and pale as any ghost I ever met. Although they went only about fifty miles up the river, they heard rumors from beyond which knock all the props from under our recent hopes. Our boys of the upper camp who started for the Allashook have returned, not being able to get over the pass on account of the deep snow. Moreover it is rumored that the golden reports from the Allashook were invented by a couple of men, one of whom has eight hundred pounds of provisions over there to sell, and the other wants to be recorder of claims.

There are other reports of strikes up the river, but I for one shall pay no heed, nor will I write about them. Several people have been up from camps below, trying to get loads of provisions. They are having a hard time. Several have returned and two are waiting for better weather. It is really dangerous traveling now. More than one man has nearly lost his life. One came to our cabin with his face frozen, and did not know it until we told him. It is useless to think of traveling in this biting cold. And here comes a pounding on our woodshed door. Half a dozen of us run to open it, glad that we have shelter for any wanderer.

CHAPTER XII.

DEC. 20.—A man has just come up from the Orphans' Home with bad news. Poor Uncle S. is lost and probably frozen to death. He left the Orphans' Home to walk to the Mission a month ago and has not been seen since, although several parties have come up from the Sound. His tracks were seen by the "Flying Dutchman" on one of the forks of the Kowak in the delta. Uncle S. had our letters, so these will never reach their destination and the home folks will be disappointed. Possibly a whole year with no news from the gold-hunters of the Arctics. I suppose the body will be found when the snow melts in the spring. Uncle S. was a nice old Quaker, speaking "thee" and "thou" habitually. He spent the night with us on his way down and was very entertaining. He played a game of whist with us in the evening, and it was very odd and amusing to hear such expressions as, "Now, Joseph, play thy hand properly." "Is this my trick or thine?" "Did thee play thy ace?" etc. Uncle Jimmy, who doesn't believe in card games, tried to start an argument with Uncle S., but the latter only said very quietly, "One can play music with good or evil intentions; so I think with a simple game of whist." I never saw Mr. S. before, and it is a strange incident up here in the Arctics, to hear him tell me about my father, who, in his youth, paid some considerable devotion to a relative of his, giving me many pleasant reminiscences of both my father's and mother's families. These old-time memories, told in the dim candlelight of the peopled cabin, interested our whole company, and we all took to calling our guest "Uncle S.", as much out of respect to the man as to a possible relationship which might have existed between himself and me. But he is gone now and we shall look forward to paying him suitable ceremonies in the spring. Our undertaker is preparing to embalm the body when discovered. He was a Friend of some note from Ohio, who drifted up here, like the rest of us "world's people," after gold.

Our camp is in quite a bustle this week preparing for Christmas. We have invited the Hanson boys up to dinner with us, and we are getting ready for a big time. The Saturday before Christmas we are to have a tree and feed all the natives in the country. The doctor has been at work on scrap picture books for the children, finding no end of beautiful chromos on the tin cans about the respective camps, besides other lithographs and steel engravings from various sources. Art is taking on shape and form and expression under the magic of the doctor's touch in a way surprising to both him and us.

The literary society last Wednesday was the best so far. Thies, of the Los Angeles Camp, read a paper on Theosophy. It was entitled, "The Home of Contentment," and was very reasonable from his point of view, and well received by all. The doctor gave a short talk on "How to Care for a Frost Bite." This was of great practical value to all present.

Dec. 21.—Forty-six degrees below zero today, and I, for the fun of it, walked down to the Hanson Camp. It was not at all uncomfortable, nothing like what it is when the wind blows, at ten degrees below zero. Normandin, of the San Jose cabin, has rigged up a turning lathe, using a grindstone as the driving wheel. He is turning out all sorts of things from birch and spruce. He has sent up a quantity of dolls' heads and

tops for the Eskimo Christmas tree. One of the Los Angeles boys is carving faces on the dolls' heads, to distinguish which is the front side of the head, the image being of the same proportions all around. He gives them almond eyes and flat noses just like the native babies.

Now that the first snow has appeared, the natives are busy at snowshoes, and several of our boys are experimenting in the same line. The Eskimos are very expert in this kind of work, and their snowshoes are models of symmetry and neatness.

The aurora is very brilliant some nights now, but there is no reason visible why, on

Near-by Neighbors.

other nights just as favorable, as far as we can discover, there is none at all. In this extremely cold weather, and especially during a sudden change of temperature, the ice in the river cracks and groans terrifically. This morning, as I was walking down to the Hanson Camp, the phenomena were very much in evidence, so much so that it was gruesome to a lonely body. At one place when I stepped off from a drift of packed snow on to the bare ice, there came a series of thundering reports like cannon shots, and then a succession of sharp reports and creaks and other awful sounds, that finally died away into the dead silence of Arctic darkness. Such combination of sounds, together with a reasonable amount of imagination sure to accompany them, is startling, especially if it is quite dark and one is all alone. Sometimes a faint crack will start others like it all around, and these in turn will give rise to a rapid fusillade extending hundreds of yards up and down the river. And there are the crunch and crackle of the dry snow under one's muckluks, emitting various modulations of sound, from the sharp bark of a dog to the squeak of a mouse. One has company even in solitude, and there can be no solitude in the world like this in the Arctics. Oh, it is all so enjoyable and fascinating to me! It is like reading a book on a new subject, for one interested in Nature to visit this country. I fear I will be sorry to leave it when the time comes. However, two years may change one's views of many things.

Dec. 29.—Four men from the Orphans' Home on their way up the river, spent last night with us, and were interesting company. One of the men, a Mr. Thornton, knows several people of Seattle and Sitka whom I know. He was at Sitka and Mt. St. Elias with the Prince Luigi party in 1897, and has an article in the "Overland Monthly" just out. He claims to have seen the Silent City, a mirage exactly resembling a distant view of a large city. Several have seen it, and one man, a photographer whom I met at Juneau two years ago, claims to have a photograph of it. I have heard it intimated that the photo is a fake. Prof. Jordan's article on the Silent City in the March, 1898, number of "Popular Science Monthly" is to the point. Thornton says there is no doubt about photos and cuts of the mirage being unauthentic, but he affirms that he and five men of the Prince Luigi party saw it just as he describes it. We had a big discussion on mirages last night. Yesterday at the literary, my paper was on the familiar topic, "What Birds Eat," and, though rather lengthy, was well received. I think our men would be interested in almost any paper that discussed the subject of eating. Dr. Gleaves lectured a week ago on the "Cruise of the Revenue Cutter 'Bear' in 1893." He was surgeon on board of her during that year. He is now president of the Hanson crowd, — more properly speaking, "The Kotzebue Mercantile and Trading Company," — just as we of the "Penelope" gang are the "Long Beach, Alaska, Mining and Trading Company." How bulky and pompous that sounds! If we do not find a bit of gold while we are here, we shall have the satisfaction of presuming ourselves to be one of the best equipped companies on the Kowak, and are looked up to very much as the Vanderbilts are in New York. Sense of such distinction as this tends to increase the size of our heads, which are really very large indeed, when considered in their covering of

wool hood, canvas hood, scarf, etc. We are advised to enjoy these sensations while it is feasible, as doubtless when we reach the wharf at San Francisco or San Pedro on our return trip we may have to foot it home just like common tramps, or prodigal sons who have wasted their substance and that of our grub-stakers in "riotous living."

On Christmas, day of all days, didn't we have a "spread"! C. C. worked at it for a month beforehand and even stayed up all the night previous cooking and compounding. I suppose he will have forty pages about it in his diary, for although he worked until he was exhausted, he declares it the

Christmas Dinner.

happiest occasion we have had. And the results of all our labor were really immense.

The ten Hanson boys and a Mr. Van Dyke dined with us. The table was twenty feet long, covered with a snow-white cloth, and lighted by two candelabra of eight candles each.

These beautiful articles of use and ornament were made by Clyde from a many branched birch, and the effect in lighting our large cabin was brilliant. The menu was gotten up by Rivers. It was a sketch of the landscape around our cabin artistically done in India ink on thin leaves of birch bark, and would have graced any table in New York.

I never sat at a table in New York, but I just know they never had a handsomer menu card. The toasts were classic, and included a poem by Dr. Coffin, which was also of a classical character. I cannot refrain from quoting one or two stanzas of the latter, on account of their sentiment as well as literary merit. The verses were well received and delivered with startling effect.

Now just a few things I would like to say
To make us remember this Christmas Day—
It isn't very often you dine with a Coffin,
When the cook and baker is an undertaker.

Now and again on a bill of choice fare
You find such a dish as roasted black bear;
But outside of the valley of the Kowak river
You will not eat pate de poisson de liver.*

Or white Touste bake and Ukluk roast
Are rarely served without Arctic frost.
On these hot mince pies there have been no flies,
For our pastry-maker is an undertaker, etc., etc.

Now on your memories we would make a mark
With a plain, simple piece of brown birch bark;
On one side a picture of the place we are *at*,
And a list of the stuff that we ate as we *sat*.

This is by no means the whole of the poem, but it is enough to intimate its character. It is Christmas and we are ice-bound. The day of all the days in a man's life, when he would naturally be blue, has been mutually cheered by those who, but for this digression, would have suffered under the circumstances. The feast lasted for two hours, and was followed by songs and instrumental music. Cox and I were waiters, Harry Reynolds served and C. C. cooked. After the banquet we four were waited on by four of the Hanson boys, who took everything into their own hands. Normandin established himself as cook and Joe Jury as head waiter, with Hays and Jack Messing under his charge. They made a combination so witty and droll in everything they did that we could scarcely eat for a time. We finally succeeded all too well for our subsequent comfort. Fun and frolic and candies and nuts occupied attention for an hour, the party at last breaking up with the singing of several church hymns.

On Saturday before Christmas the natives were all gathered in, as well as the whites, and we served the former a "big feed," afterwards exhibiting a brilliant Christmas tree and the venerable Santa Claus. Everyone took part in contributing toys and so forth to the children. There were dolls, tops, whistles, jumping-jacks, cooky people, nuts, candy, etc. It would take a whole note book to describe this part of the Christmas

*Pie of fish liver.

festivities on the Kowak — how the old people awkwardly tried to use knives and forks in eating, and how Santa Claus was greeted, and the wooden dolls, and all the rest. Some of the dolls fell to our boys. I am sure they reminded us of home. After the tree the natives danced, the girls in a graceful manner, and the boys representing fights or something of the kind, all the while being accompanied by a beating of tin cans, stamping and monotonous singing. There were thirty Indians and as many white men present.

At High Noon.

Jan. 7, 1899.—Last week we were surprised by what we took at first for an Arctic apparition. Uncle S., whom everyone had given up for dead, arrived, accompanied by the missionaries from Cape Blossom, Mr. and Mrs. Samms. They had come up with dog sledges. Uncle S. had brought mail from St. Michaels, and the load was very heavy, there being two hundred and fifty pounds of mail alone. He had but nine dogs, and left most of the mail at Kotzebue Camp, where the snow was too deep to travel further with it. He and Mr. and Mrs. Samms pushed on up here, and, as all were pretty tired, several of the boys volunteered to go down to the Kotzebue Camp, which is sixty miles below us, for the mail and other sled. I was a volunteer, along with several from the Hanson Camp as well as of this, as we were all anxious to get the delayed mail. But a few hours later, when we began to realize what a hard trip it would be, everyone backed down until only Cox and I were left. These boys stood on the burning deck, and made believe they didn't care, especially as that brave little missionary woman had just made a trip over the same road of more than two hundred miles and on foot.

That same day Joe Cogan and Sam Colclough came along on their way to the Allashook. They had a team of eight dogs, but, after inquiring of all the natives, they found they could obtain no more dog's food, nor is there any along the river above here. So as they were going to start back down the next day, Cox and I decided to go with them. I did not relish the anticipation of the trip at all, and, now that it is over, I must say that it is the hardest journey I ever hope to make. We returned last night, having been on foot for seven days, making one hundred and twenty miles of very, very hard walking.

We had five dogs from here; these, with Cogan's, made thirteen. We loaded our blankets and clothing on Cogan's sled and hitched up the thirteen dogs to it in a line. The sled was a very heavy one and the load resembled it. It went all right until we got on some sand-bars about a mile below the Hanson Camp, and there our trouble began. The snow was light and the heavy runners cut through to the gravel beneath, making hard pulling. We were trying our best to get over when the sled struck a rock, and, in dragging it off, two of the standards broke off at the runner. Of course we had to return, leaving the load cached on the trail. At the Hanson Camp we got some wire and necessary tools, and by this time it was afternoon. The San Jose crew of the Hanson Camp must have us stop for dinner, and it was a fine one, too, with the immediate future ahead of us. Had we not been thus refreshed, I do not think we could have made the Jesse Lou Camp that night. Colclough declared our bad luck was all on account of the dogs, thirteen in number, so we borrowed two more and also another sled. The dogs pull much better in small teams and we now made good time. They carry their bushy tails curled up gracefully over their backs, and trot along the trail with ears erect and pointed forward, the very picture of lively animation. It was three o'clock by the time we got our second start and darkness was soon upon us. Besides, it was cloudy, with no moon, and snow was falling. Light snow had fallen to the depth of four or five inches, obscuring the old trail so that we soon lost it. And then our fun began. It is twelve miles from the Hanson to the Jesse Lou Camp, and it was not until ten o'clock that we came around the bluff at the latter camp. The snow-covered river bed was a uniform blank whiteness, bordered by the dark line of willows and spruces, and whoever was in the lead had nothing to guide him but kept as near as he could between the banks.

Occasionally the sleds would meet and grapple with snags and rocks or sand-bars with little snow on them, and then we would have to strike off at right angles. Just before we reached our destination for

the night, we got into a large field of broken ice in which we floundered about for half an hour. The ice was in plates or narrow strips an inch or less in thickness, all up on edge, jammed thus when the river had first frozen over. These sharp plates mostly leaned obliquely up stream and stuck out of the snow as high as two feet, with gaps and holes between. We had a dreadful time. Our sled tipped over and the dogs dragged it on its side for several yards before we could stop them and fix the pack again. And then our shins! We could not see a thing, and sometimes a step would be down into a hole and the next step on top of a sharp edge of ice. If I fell down once I did twenty times. Cox had never worn muckluks before, and it was particularly hard on his feet. By the time we got to camp we were tired enough to lie down anywhere, whether we froze to death or not.

We were warmly welcomed at the first of the three Jesse Lou cabins which we struck, and they got us a hot supper and fixed our beds in true Kowak hospitality. It was New Year's Eve, 1899, before we got to bed.

By nine the next morning we were off again. The next halt was an Indian igloo thirty miles below. Before we had gone a third of the way my legs began to pain me so that I walked with difficulty. One of them was strained by a fall on the ice the night before, and I was in absolute torture all day. It was my first real suffering. Finally, when we had gone about fifteen miles, as it was getting dark and we did not care for a repetition of the previous night's experience, we made camp. Cogan had a tent and stove, and his companion was a "rustler." A patch of snow was soon scraped off and the tent put up. But it took a long time to heat the interior above the freezing point. Too much of the exterior gets into a tent.

It was forty degrees below zero that night and the next day. After one has perspired a good deal during the day he soon chills when he stops, if he forgets to put on more clothes. I had a big reindeer parka and also a pair of huge deerskin mittens. Without the latter I should surely have frozen my hands. The dogs ate up Cox's leather-covered mittens, and I gave him one of my pairs. The pair I wore got soaked with sweat and then froze on my hands as hard as a rock. If I had not happened to have the deerskin mitts to change with, I might have lost a few of my extra fingers. Cox did blister his. Colclough got up some hot flapjacks and bacon and we were filled. I slept in the parka and kept pretty warm.

The Jesse Lou Camp.

The rest occupied the big deerskin sleeping bag, which is the only safe bed in an Arctic camp.

CHAPTER XIII.

OUR midwinter trip for the mail was a chapter in our icy history never to be forgotten. We made the next fifteen miles to the Indian Igloo in good time. Cox and I slept in the igloo, but the rest in the tent. The fourth day we made the last fifteen miles to the Kotzebue Camp, where the sled and mail had been left. Besides the mail, there were two pipes about twenty feet long and weighing perhaps one hundred pounds each. Then there were our blankets and extra clothes and dog food, bringing the return load up to four hundred pounds for our six dogs. Cogan and Colclough went on down to the Riley wreck with all their belongings, so we had no stove or tent for the return trip, trusting to good weather in making the long stretches. There is only one cabin at the Kotzebue Camp, and this a

very small one, but we managed to find room to lie down somewhere. We also made a big stew of canned beef, dessicated potatoes and onions, with lots of pepper and sage. It was good and stimulating, and upon this we based our courage. It was a fine base. We found the load pretty heavy for the dogs, one of which wasn't of much account, and our progress was slow. Where the snow was deep and the trail rough we had to help some ourselves. An animal with four feet has much advantage over a human with but two. We made the return trip in three days, fifteen miles from the Kotzebue Camp to the igloo, thirty miles from the igloo to the Jesse Lou, and fifteen miles

Winter Travelers.

from there to the Penelope Camp, making one hundred and twenty miles in seven days. By the third day out my limbs became accustomed to the hard walking and my lameness disappeared. The thirty-mile stretch we made in twelve hours, starting from the igloo before daylight. The northern lights were not visible during our return trip, although previously one could read by them. The cold was not excessive nor did we meet with any terrible accidents, but I will record that I have had enough of winter travel in the Arctics. I am of the same mind as Hard-luck Jimmy, who, after attempting to reach the site of the "latest strike" and getting caught out in a snowstorm, said in his slow, comprehensive manner of speech: "It would take all the men in Ambler City with a great big hawser to pull me away from my warm cabin and grub again this winter."

The thirty-mile stretch of our road was long. No change of scenery for entertainment. When we got around one bend in the river it was just to plod along until we got to the next. It took three hours for us to cover one straight piece of trail. We ate nothing that day but a little frozen bread. We had nothing to cook, and there was no time to cook it if we had, and no dishes or stove. But we were served to a fine supper at the Jesse Lou. The dogs did finely that day. We gave them a feed in the morning before starting. Usually dogs are fed but once a day, at night, and then only about one pound of frozen or dried fish to the animal. At night we let the dogs loose and, if at a village, they forage around for scraps of anything, which of course are extra rations. They steal any provisions left unprotected. They ate Cox's leather mittens, the thongs on Cogan's snowshoes, and a leather gun case. One night they broke into the "grub-box," and got away with everything in it, including a sack of oatmeal and a side of bacon. Owing to their preference for leather, we had to sleep on the harnesses and with our heads on the "grub-box." These Eskimo dogs look just like wolves, but are docile and often playful. They do not bark like civilized dogs, but snarl and growl. Some nights they would howl in concert for hours at a time, making a weird sensation in the silence of the ice.

In sledding, the dogs are tied by their harness strings alternately to a straight lead-rope. One dog is "leader," and he is the most intelligent of the pack. During the trip Cox walked about a hundred yards ahead of the lead dog, now and then turning back and whistling or calling. I walked behind, keeping the sled straight, and untangling the team when it got mixed up. Each dog has a name, and his character qualities become as well known to us as those of a human individual. Ours were named Emik, Kubuck, Auboon, Nanuk and Tingle. One day Emik jumped on to the dog that was not pulling his share and gave him a sound whipping. The whole pack joined in and I had to beat them off with a club.

Ordinary animals would have died of broken bones, but it took a "sore chastisement" to bring these dogs to their senses. Fights are frequent and always mean two

or three minutes' delay in untangling the lines. The harnesses are provided with swivels or else the lines would soon become hopelessly twisted.

The two pipes I mentioned as part of the load, stuck out behind some eight feet beyond the sled, and many a time when the dogs slowed up suddenly my shins would come in contact with the sharp iron in a painfully emphatic manner. The crunching of the dry snow under the sled runners is a combination of sounds in which one can but imagine he hears familiar voices, and one falls to day-dreaming as he plods along, until he is surprised by running against the slacking sled or stepping into a hole.

The two nights we spent in the Eskimo igloo were interesting in detail. On the way down I was so tired that I paid little attention to anything, curling up and thankfully sleeping. On the return trip we made the igloo just at dusk. The trail was poor and the snow deep and the load heavy, so that we had made scarcely more than two miles to the hour. When we got within sight of the igloo the dogs pricked up their ears, as is their wont, and started forward at an increasing gait. Dogs will sometimes smell a camp long before it comes into view, and their quickened pace testifies to their hope of food. When our team rushed up to the igloo, we followed at a trot behind, and nearly all the inmates hurried out, curious to see us. These poor people are very hospitable, and at once invited us inside. We did not enter, however, until everything was attended to, for, after one has straightened out to rest before a warm fire, it is very hard to get up and crawl out again on stiffened limbs to attend to duties easier performed before one settles down. The native boys helped us to untie knots, and soon the dogs were loose, scurrying everywhere for bits of anything devourable, and frequently having a savage fight over some imaginary tidbit. Everything but the two iron pipes, which we trusted the dogs would not eat, was deposited on the scaffold for the night. This scaffold is a necessary feature of every igloo. It consists of a platform of poles and boughs raised about eight feet above the ground and supported on four posts. On this are stored all the fish, skins, nets, harnesses, sleds, kyaks, and, in fact, every article not needed for immediate use in the igloo.

After the dogs were fed, we took a blanket apiece and crawled into the igloo. We were motioned to a vacant place on one side, where we stretched out as far as the limits of the room permitted. This igloo was built like a Sioux wick-i-up. Long, slender poles are fastened into the ground at one end, bent over and lashed with thongs on the opposite side. These are planted about a foot apart all around, until the whole completed frame is like an inverted hemisphere. Over this are fastened thicknesses of spruce bark stripped from the trees in sheets one or two feet wide and twice as long. At the top a circular opening is left, a foot in diameter, for the exit of smoke. The whole structure is covered and packed with six inches of snow, which effectually keeps out every bit of wind and incidentally every particle of fresh air, except what steals in through the smoke-hole and door when they are open. The entrance is closed by several strips of sail-cloth attached above and weighted, so that it always hangs over the opening and completely covers it. When one enters he must get down on his hands and knees and, lifting up a corner of this canvas door, crawl through the passage. The door falls back

Native Igloo, with Scaffold for Stores.

into its place behind. The passageway is so narrow and low that a large man can with difficulty crawl through. The floor inside, with the exception of a space around the fireplace, is carpeted with slender willow saplings, laid parallel and fitted closely together, forming a fairly good paving or heavy matting, sufficient to protect the occupants from direct contact with the ground. A few old deerskins are spread out where the elders sleep. The space on the opposite side of the fireplace from the door is not occupied by anyone, but is filled with cooking utensils, the water bucket with its wooden dipper, carved wooden bowls, and birch bark baskets. In this igloo — about

Getting Supper Under Omiak-puk.

twelve feet in diameter — fifteen people live almost all the time, only going outside when they must for wood and water. No books to read, no politics to discuss, no school to get ready for, and no visiting to do. Once in this residence, we were allotted a space next to the oldest man of the igloo. We were content with our small lot, for we were tired and hungry.

The light was furnished from seal oil. A plate of this, with a pinch of moss for a wick, furnished the light. The penetrating smell of burning seal oil is very stifling, and a white man can hardly stand it. Considering our distinguished character, these people dispensed with the oil and lighted candles instead, which I suppose had been obtained from the whites by trade. Our scanty grub-bag next claimed our attention and, considering it good policy under the peculiar circumstances, we distributed the remainder of the hardtack, which had been reduced to crumbs, among our hosts, who watched our every movement. We also had a little flour, but, as we had no means of cooking it, we presented that also to the woman on the far side of the igloo, who was apparently the mistress of ceremonies; for, although three other women were in the house, she carried all the water, chopped all the wood and prepared the meals. We made our supper from a can of corned beef and a loaf of bread, baked for us at the Kotzebue camp. Seeing our destitution, with true American hospitality the woman before mentioned left the igloo and shortly returned with a birch-bark basket about eighteen inches long by six inches wide full of a frozen mass of blueberries. This was evidently a "company dish," the best in her possession. She detached a large chunk of the preserves and placed it in a frying pan over the fire. As it melted into individual berries she stirred the mixture constantly. After the mess was thoroughly melted she passed the pan over to me, and, by the smell which arose, I was aware that the blueberries were put up in seal oil, as a sort of salad, I suppose. Cox declared his appetite lacked severity sufficient to tempt him to even taste the compound, but I was hungry enough to eat anything, and partly because I did not want to disappoint the motherly old woman, who had taken all that trouble to treat us to the greatest luxury possible, I ate with apparent relish. I did no more nor less than hundreds of my people do at any civilized banquet or even a meal at a friend's, when they pretend to like oysters or shrimps or anything from sheer politeness, the which they thoroughly detest. I got away with the entire panful, along with a slab of dried salmon given to me by the old man. These kind people evidently looked upon me as a good-natured, hungry little boy whom they enjoyed entertaining out of their natural hospitality of heart. I have no doubt my mother will long to grasp that old Eskimo woman's hand and possibly kiss her ugly but kind features, for the sake of her goodness to her "wandering boy."

Truly the fish was not at all bad, and I secured a piece for my lunch the next day. It proved to be just the thing, as I could chew it while tramping along, and one does not need water to drink with it. The native next to me in the igloo showed me how to strip the skin from the piece of dried salmon and prepare it for eating. He held the skin side over the fire until it began to crinkle and writhe. The oil which it contains is thus melted and the dainty rendered more toothsome.

After our hunger was, with these native articles of food besides our own bread and corned beef, sufficiently subdued, we stretched out as far as possible in our limited space. Cox was soon asleep. We agreed that in order to make the thirty miles next day it would be necessary to start before daylight, as there was then a waning moon to light us a little. Cox was especially impressed with this idea, and went to sleep determined to wake up the minute the moon rose, which would be about five in the morning. He had scarcely been asleep ten minutes, and I had not dozed off yet, when he started up, and I had all I could do to persuade him that the night had hardly begun.

Later, and until we finally did start, he woke me several times and would go out and look for the moon, which he was sure was behind the schedule time. We could not see the trail until it did appear, so each time he would return and drop to sleep again. This crazy conduct on his part vexed me not a little, as I wanted to sleep, being prevented by other disturbances besides his own.

After we had eaten our supper and got settled down, the other people ate theirs, which consisted entirely of dried salmon. This was eaten raw, each mouthful being chewed for a long time. The young men say that this kind of diet is what makes the Kowak-mitts (natives of the Kowak valley) so strong. I must confess to the apparent truth of this statement, for the whole house knows it when an Eskimo enters; that is, if there hasn't been one around long enough to have allowed an airing. Even the pretty girls are so fishy that a tenderfoot in this land can scarcely endure their remote presence. The salmon is cured during the summer and kept on scaffolds, being brought down only as it is required for use. The old men soak it up in water a while before eating it.

Directly after their simple supper the natives began arranging themselves in their proper nooks in any place where there was room enough to lie down. The men and older women and all the children in the igloo wore nothing but skin pants, being entirely naked from the waist up. At night, however, they put on their skin parkas, as the temperature in the room falls quickly when the fire goes out. When all are ready, the woman of the household goes outside and covers up the smoke-hole in the top of the house with an old skin, and besides piles snow over it thickly so not a particle of cold can get in. The fire in the center of the room has meanwhile been allowed to burn down to a bed of coals, so there is no smoke or flame left. In returning the woman also tightly closes the doorway. If any air is getting in anywhere one can see the stream of dense vapor caused by the extremely cold outside air striking the warm, moist air of the interior. If the door is left the least bit ajar a stream of this vapor is seen flowing along the floor straight into the fire. If one's feet meet this current of cold they soon chill. After the coals are heaped together and all other preparations for the night completed, the light is extinguished and sleep reigns. For a while after the igloo has been closed the air seems extremely hot and stifling and the odors are terrific. In an hour or two the fire is dead and the air cools off.

My night's rest might have been quite sound but for certain disturbances. I had just dozed off after being aroused by Coxie, when one of the men began to sing some Eskimo ditty in a weird monotone. He would drone it through and stop, and I would just be dropping off to sleep when he would start it up again. He continued for fully half an hour, and I was so thoroughly tried by it that I could have choked the fellow. The natives all slept soundly and probably considered it a lullaby. Another time I was awakened by the old man next to me singing in a high, jerky voice. He got up, all the time singing, and went over to the old woman, who was saying something to him. Then followed a series of the most diabolical noises — hisses, swishes, grunts, groans, guttural rattles and so forth. It hardly seemed possible that some of these sounds could originate in a human throat, but as they were without intermission, I suppose they did. This was finally interrupted by a loud, ripping swish, as if something had been forcibly torn up. All was then quiet, and the old man returned and lay down next to me. I did not know but he would practice his incantations upon me next, but my fears were groundless. During the creepy performance it was pitch dark, and I could almost imagine we were about to be sacrificed in some heathen rite. I asked one of the young men what was the matter, and he told me that the woman had a pain in her stomach, probably from swallowing her salmon in too much haste, and the old man had cured her by driving the demon out. This practice is like that I have heard my father say existed among the Comanche Indians in the Southwest.

At last, after one of his frequent observations, Coxie reported that the moon was up. The candle was lighted and we soon had all our traps out of the igloo. Our mitts, scarfs, socks, etc., had been hung up to dry. The dryer one's clothes are, the warmer he keeps. Rain is not necessary to dampness either, perspiration every walking moment being free and persistent. We soon had the dogs hitched up, all but one, Nanuk, who caused us considerable delay by running off into the brush and hiding himself. Finally after several of the natives had helped, he was secured and our pack arranged.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAMP PENELOPE, Jan. 10, 1899.—Yesterday morning Uncle S. and Samms started on up the river with their dog sleds and mail. C. C. and Cox went with them. They hope to reach the Upper Penelope Camp and learn as much as they can of the outlook and the wish of the men as to segregation in the spring. They will have no easy trip of it, but C. C. seems to covet experience in winter traveling, and I think he will be the recipient of it this time.

The Departure.

When Cox and I got in with the mail, all the neighbors crowded into our cabin and there was general excitement until the sacks were gone through and the fate of each determined. Nearly everyone got letters. The latest news was dated August 22, and we had full accounts as to the probable closing of the war. I received six letters. Down at Kotzebue Camp I opened only one of these, the one of the latest date, and found it so bright and jolly that my spirits were at the highest pitch all the way home. Moral: Folks at home, write cheery letters to absent ones wherever they may be. The snow may be deep, and the dogs may be mad, and the trail rough.

We are beginning to talk about "going home," and of the probability of our cold welcome among our town's folk, who will possibly ridicule us as "fake gold-hunters," "prodigal sons," and all that. I was reading an article in one of the magazines last night, proving that an ambitious poor man nowadays has far more chances for success in any line than a rich one, and that "extreme poverty does not debar a man otherwise endowed, from entrance into the best society in the land." This in America of course. So we are saying in concert, while the latest news of gold fades into vapor, "Poverty is a blessing." It's a comfort to look at it in that light anyway. But it does not help some of our boys over the blues. Several put all they had into this venture, and on their return are destined to start all over again at day's work. I must own that I am myself the victim of some reluctance to return with empty gold-pan, and the old story of putting "gold into the fire and behold there came forth this calf" comes to me. We may have sufficient supplies to keep us in Alaska another year.

Uncle S. is one man that is making a success. He charges fifty cents for each letter or package he brings up the river. My bill would have been six dollars at that rate, but of course my trip down more than met that. The doctor got twenty-four letters and many papers. Don't know whether he has settled his bill or not.

Mrs. Samms is with us until the return of Mr. Samms, which will be not less than three weeks if the weather is good. It seems odd to have a lady in the cabin, but she is very agreeable and we like her company. We modify our usual reckless behavior and serve her in every possible way.

She is teaching a class of children at the mission cabin. Mr. Samms is on an errand to get a census of native population and to note the condition of the Kowak Eskimos.

There is likely to be a famine among them before spring, as they have spent too much time in watching the whites this year, neglecting to fish and hunt at the season. There is now little game in the country, and by next winter they will be destitute in clothing as well as food unless they receive help from outside.

Jan. 11, 6 a. m.—The doctor and I have just got out of bed, hours before the usual time of rising. We think we can write better, or read, early in the morning before everybody is up and story-telling and making noises in the room. When we are all active it is difficult to think.

The north wind is blowing a gale again, and its steady roar through the spruces outside, accompanied by the monotonous whisper or undertone whistling down the stovepipe, gives one a lonesome, dreary feeling. I almost shivered just now all on account of the sounds, although there is a blazing fire in the heater and the whole cabin is warm and comfortable.

We have had no trouble in keeping warm. In the corners near the ground there is always plenty of frost, and if one sits or stands long in such a locality his feet get cold. But out in the room it is always pleasant. We have not put in double windows, as we expected to do, there being no need of them. The single large sheet of glass in each window is all-sufficient, though the frost collects in very thick layers on the inside. This is probably one reason why it is so warm. We took out the window panes the other day and melted off the ice. It was nearly two inches thick on the lower part. The panes are over two feet square, and the frost work on them is beautiful to look at. The designs are constantly changing. Sometimes great fern fronds extend from the bottom clear to the top, and then another time the pattern is small, like delicate moss. When it is thick one can see cities and mountain crags and almost anything besides, if his imagination is alert.

The days are perceptibly longer now and yesterday sunlight touched the tops of the trees near the cabin. But it will be many weeks before the sun has sufficient effect to make any change in the temperature. Mrs. Samms says that February is our coldest month. We are getting along quite harmoniously in domestic affairs now. C. C.'s term of office as culinary chief expired at Christmas, and Rivers was elected to take his place, with myself as assistant. So I am back at my old stand again. There's one thing certain — we shall have less pies now. I think I shall be able to obtain a place as cook in a restaurant when I go back to the States if nothing better turns up. Our supply of some articles is getting short. We are going slow on mush and sugar, and the flour will not last longer than April at the rate we are using it now. However, our motto is to eat while we have the means, and go without when it is gone. Of course there is plenty in the "Penelope," if she is safe. We have a great deal of company at meals. Everyone traveling on the river stops in, either for a single meal or for the night. We like to be hospitable, and one has to be in this country. Wherever our own boys have been, up or down the river, they are treated royally at every camp, as I can personally testify.

Some of Mrs. Samms' Pupils.

We do not feed the Indians any more at all, and it is better for them. They have become so dependent upon the whites that they do not work for themselves any more. When they might be fishing or trapping, they are hanging around our cabins. They do not visit us as often now as in the fall. Rivers and I send them outside whenever meal-time comes, and they are beginning to learn. We must do this or suffer ourselves from hunger in a late spring.

Uncle S. reported that he found the "Pen-

elope" in a safe place in a small inlet in Escholtz Bay. We received letters from the captain and Jett and Fancher. They have been on a sled trip up to the Buckland River, but with no success. However, they are in good spirits, hoping that something will be found before spring. Rumors reach us as to "finds" on the Noatak River, but we do not pay the least attention to them. The "Flying Dutchman" dropped in on us again yesterday. He is a "rustler," and will make it pay under any circumstances. He has more grit than all the rest of the men on the Kowak. He has a partner now in carrying mail, and a sled with dogs.

Jan. 15, Sunday, 6 a. m.—I am up alone. The doctor is a great fellow to lie in bed, excepting on rare occasions, when he is very smart. He even takes his afternoon nap regularly, and then sleeps ten hours at night. The wind is blowing at the same rate it has been going for a week. One day it was a fearful storm. It blew so one could scarcely stand up against it, and the snow and sand were driven along in blinding blasts.

On the River Bank.

We can easily see now how the hills and dunes on the south side of the Kowak valley are formed. It blows with such force that all the snow is taken off from the sandbars, and all the loose sand as well, and finally the coarse gravel is driven off on to the ice, where it travels until it reaches the south bank of the river, where drifts ten feet deep have been formed the last week. The natives tell us that in two moons from this the wind will blow harder than ever, and that it will be much colder. Yesterday we piled more sand and brush around the north and east side of the house. The wind had carried away a good deal of the original banking. The doctor was quite snowed into his bed one morning. We couldn't find the place of entrance, but it is now doubtless covered.

Yesterday was washing-day for me personally. We do our washing one at a time for reasons of necessity. I had a large wash, as a part of it had been accumulating since August of last year. It is our habit to put off this very disagreeable duty as long as we decently can. I put in two faithful hours over the tub until my knuckles were sore and my back so lame I could only with difficulty straighten myself. I succeeded at last in "doing" ten pairs of socks, seven handkerchiefs, three towels and a suit of underwear, besides other things. I can now sympathize most heartily with the washerwoman of history. I have the clothes drying on the rafters above the stovepipe. The union suit is an awkward thing to handle in washing. I would rather tackle a blanket. A blanket has not two arms and two legs to be continually in the way. I could not wring it out very well, and after hanging it up to dry it dripped for several hours, sprinkling anyone who ventured under it. Uncle Jimmy sat down comfortably to read a good book, but he chanced to be in the line of gravity, and a splash on top of his bald head prompted him to address some words to me. It was only a few days ago that Uncle Jimmy's washing was "out," and I frequently had the edifying sensation of a sloppy, dripping drawers leg slapping me in the face as I moved about the kitchen stove in my culinary duties. We have to be patient and charitable when it is washing day, and other days. I will say that our domestic life is not often marred by so small a trifle as water dripping from a drawers leg. If we were sensitive to little things we

would find frequent opportunity for grumbling.

Jan. 23, 9 a. m.—Just got through with breakfast. Our menu is much the same these days — corn-meal mush, biscuit or flapjacks, hash, bacon, flour gravy and coffee. Kowak hash is a work of art, and is deserving of especial mention. It is a sort of literary review of the previous day's dishes. This morning it was simpler than usual, and consisted of only split peas, corn-meal mush, bacon, rice, toasted bread, salt-horse and beans, seasoned to taste. And yet the "beasts" claim their appetite is impaired! Needn't have eaten up all the luxuries the first thing.

Several of the boys like to go out visiting the other camps in the evening, and not get home till morning "or thereabouts." I am a "good little boy," and go to bed at nine and get up at six. I have the breakfast ready shortly after eight, and then the fun begins, getting the boys up. They want to lie in bed till twelve, and Uncle Jimmy joins us in making it so uncomfortable for them they prefer rising.

Harry Reynolds is washing to-day. He has just discovered that he has made a sad mistake. He dumped his bundle of clean socks into the tub instead of the soiled ones. General laughter at his expense. But H. wrings them out "dryly." He knows the laugh will not be on him next washing day.

The jolly missionary's wife is singing in my ear something about "Darling Joe." Now, she thinks because she happens to be married that I must be much younger than she — in fact "quite a lad." In point of fact I am the older. It was my turn to shave yesterday, and I did so, consequently my chin is smarting. It is an unnatural process, and I think should be prohibited by act of congress.

I have been reading "A Scientific Demonstration of the Future Life," by Hudson. It interested me very much, and the doctor and I got into many a warm argument over it. It is a strange fact that we never argue upon subjects we agree upon. I always stick to my sharp point and he to his. Our discussions are usually on some biological topic, and the rest of the men do not know what we are talking about. One night, after a long argument in which I would not yield a single point when the doctor thought I ought, he wrote me the following

ODE.

Mon ami, Joe,
A thing I know
Is, you are Joe.
Why this is so
I do not know:
But well I know
You *will* be Joe,
Until you go
From earth below.

But even so,
My young friend Joe,
Before you go
You'll *not* be Joe,
(The same *I* know)
For you will grow
Both old and slow,
And fall below
To what you'd grow
In things to know
Of what is so.

On things you know
And say are *so*,
Hard winds will blow,
And light will grow,
And change them so
You will not know
That they are so.

And then, by Joe,
You'll be more slow
To say you know
A thing is so.
'Cause then you'll know
That what *was* so
When you were Joe
May not be so
When you're not Joe;
And that *is* so
Which was not so
When you were Joe
Down here below.

I like you, Joe,
I'd have you know;
And that is so,
Because you're Joe.
And be it so,
Mon ami, Joe,
As to and fro
The world you go;
That which you know
Declare 'tis *so;*
And so *be* Joe,
The Joe I know,
"Chickadee Joe."

CHAPTER XV.

JAN. 23, 2 p. m.—I went out to look at the thermometer, when I heard the cackling of ptarmigan the other side of the river. Harry Reynolds and I armed ourselves and started out for game. We spotted the flock

in a willow thicket where the sun, which nowadays is just at the horizon, had probably attracted them. Several of the birds were perched on top of the bushes, and were very conspicuous against the dark sky. We sneaked up to them and got a shot. Harry's gun got choked with snow and missed fire. We followed up the birds and, after two hours of hard tramping, I had four shots, securing three ptarmigan. The walking was

Grave Decorations.

extremely difficult. The snow from the tundras northward was deeply drifted along the willow thickets. It was packed just hard enough on top so that at about every other step it would sustain one's weight, but the alternate steps would break through nearly to one's waist. In some places we fell and floundered, and we considered our sport rather too well earned. One of my cheeks was frosted, but Harry brought it out all right by a vigorous rubbing with snow.

It is too cold for hunting. I cannot shoot with gloves on, and my bare fingers get burned by the cold steel of the hammers and triggers. Harry had the doctor's Winchester repeating shot-gun. Although a fine gun in warm weather, it seems to get out of gear now. My plain double-barreled Remington is the stand-by. I look at it and it seems to say, "Wait till spring comes, Joe, and we'll get in our work."

The literary society is as interesting as at first. Last Wednesday Joe Jury talked on the "Art of Printing." He is a printer by trade and has quite a business in San Jose. The week before Jack Messing told us about the Hawaiian Islands. He was there for two months a year ago. Nearly all of us are in favor of sailing around and visiting our new islands on the way home. It is only about two thousand miles out of our way. Personally I would like to make a long cruise and visit the Philippines and Ladrones. Several of the boys are growing desperately homesick. Time drags for them, and tney are counting the days to next July when they can get out of the Kowak Valley and start for home. I have overheard a couple of them planning how they might even now go across country to St. Michaels, so as to be ready for the first steamer in the spring. Enthusiasm is a myth. It was less than a year ago that, "No matter what happens, we will push on into the interior and explore the unknown mountains until we strike gold." Now it is, "How soon can we get home?" Such is human nature.

Everyone is making snowshoes or getting the natives to make them. I must get a pair as curiosities to send home. The natives do nice work, and are improving their opportunities to get a good price. They get three to five dollars worth of food or clothes for a pair of muckluks. Snowshoes bring ten dollars. Indian Charley has made the doctor a nice miniature sled and pair of snowshoes for treating him when he was sick. Charley shows more gratitude and good-will than any other of the natives. But he has some great ideas. Last week he worked hard from daylight till dark in a cold wind clearing away the trees and brush from his little child's grave. He cut down everything clean between the grave and the river, saying this was so "the Kowak-mitts traveling up and down the river" could see his "mickaninie's" burial-place. He took the tree trunks and poles and leaned them together over the grave, tepee fashion, so the dogs

and wolves cannot dig in. He left several of the taller trees immediately surrounding the grave, and climbed to their tops, trimming off the branches as he came down. He then fastened flags to these poles until he had fourteen up, with every prospect of more. He used everything, such as sailcloth, handkerchiefs and sacks. We thought if he kept on he might have all the clothes he possessed fluttering in the wind like a Monday morning wash, only the clothes lines were perpendicular instead of horizontal. We remonstrated with him, telling him the "cabloonas" never put flags over their graves; but he insisted that he wanted to make this spot conspicuous so that everyone would notice it. The doctor thought of a scheme and Clyde put it into operation. He made a windmill about four feet in diameter and with a big fan. It was well made, and took Clyde two whole days to finish. Charley was very much pleased with it, and it was promptly lashed to the top of the tallest tree, whence resound its mournful creaks whenever the wind blows. Charley wanted to know if all cabloonas put windmills over the graves of their dead. Charley is very ambitious to do exactly like a white man and yet, like many another, he seems to think a disregard of native superstitions would be disastrous. He asked us yesterday if he would die if he should take some little pills the doctor gave him for some trifling ailment. He said that some Kowak-mitts told him so. There is an old woman in the middle igloo of the village who keeps these natives in such ideas. The sooner she goes "mucky" (dead) the better it will be for her people. About New Year's an old man at her igloo was very sick and was expected to die. For fear of having him die in her igloo, and thus, as she believed, render the house uninhabitable, she turned him out into the extreme cold. His son stayed with him and made a big fire. As soon as we found it out the nearest cabin took the sick man in, and did all they could for him, although he died in a short time. Women here have a harder life than can be imagined. A child is never born in an igloo, but, no matter how cold the weather is, the mother is driven out, not to return with her child until it is five days old. There have been three such cases so far near us. The last was during a ten-days' windstorm. The woman went alone back into as sheltered a place as she could find in the woods, and made a screen of spruce boughs to protect her from the storm. In front of this she kept a small fire burning and there she remained with but little clothing all the bitter days of her allotted time. An old woman occasionally visited her and brought her food and wood. The baby froze to death.

Jan. 28.—Who should drop in on us night before last but three of our boys from the upper camp, Miller Casey and Alec. They report everyone in good health, but the gold outlook is altogether "nil." All the reports have been run down and there is no encouragement offered anywhere. The boys staked out fifteen claims in the districts which showed "indications." Holes have been dug, but in a few feet they strike water and can go no further. This report is for the late fall. C. C. and Mr. Samms had just arrived when the boys left. Uncle S. and Samms had seven out of their nine dogs killed by poison in some unexplained way at one of the camps. They bought five more at the Riley Camp for fifty dollars. Our dog Tingle was among the killed. C. C. and Samms intended to go twenty-five miles further to a village at the Par River. This party will remain with us until the return of C. C. They came down "just to kill time." They say it is pretty monotonous at the other camp. They carried a pack of about thirty pounds each and were very tired. Foote started with them, but gave up half way down. Casey and Miller, as well as Alec, are jolly good fellows and we hope they will stay with us a good while. Our grub is getting rather low. The boys up the river had the larger share. It will probably carry them through to July. But I think, unless we can borrow from neigh-

Native Sweethearts.

Superstitious Old Woman.

bors, a delegation of us from this camp will have to go down to the "Penelope" at Escholtz Bay and bring supplies. I'm sure it will not be I. I shall be here when spring opens for the bird migrations. The boys report that two of the river steamers are lost. They were put into a side stream to freeze up for the winter. This stream is fed by warm springs which kept running after the stream froze over, depositing successive layers of ice around the boats until one of them is buried entirely out of sight, smokestack and all. The other, the "Agnes E. Boyd," belonging to the Hanson Company, is about half buried. If these boats had been watched at the start and dams put around them and then raised, they could have been saved. But now they are entombed in solid ice, and, unless they are chopped out before spring, the torrents when the thaw comes will smash them to pieces. The little "Helen" is so far all safe. That slow, ugly-looking little scow, which everybody made fun of last fall, may be ahead of all the big steamers next spring. Already the Hanson boys are talking about making arrangements with us for taking them down to the Mission. Thus shall the first be last and the last first. The general opinion of our boys now seems to be, if nothing is found in this country by next July, to sail down along the coast to Bristol Bay and way stations, inquiring as to the news from those sections, and finally taking in the Aleutian Islands. This suits my inclinations. Reports are coming directly from the Yukon region that there is nothing to encourage one to go there. It is safe to conclude that newspaper reports are as nine to ten exaggerated. There are thousands of disappointed people in all sections of central Alaska. Travel is almost impossible.

Jan. 31, Tuesday.—We are having cloudy weather with a little snow. The thermometer stands at ten degrees below zero, and it is uncomfortably warm in our winter clothes. I shot four ptarmigan yesterday, two of which I have just finished skinning. I got three at one shot, standing, and the other on the wing. The doctor is out now hunting the birds. Whenever I get any game it excites him so that he immediately goes hunting. He seldom starts until I have set the example. I do not have success oftener than each third hunt. Walking through the snow is very tiresome, but one must be persistent in this as in other things. It seems to be only chance that I ever do find the ptarmigan. I usually search for fresh tracks along the bushy margins of lakes or sloughs and then follow them up. Mornings I find them mostly near their roosting-places, and they seldom fly far. They sleep on the ground, burrowing into the snow and clearing a bare wallow on the warm, soft moss. It is difficult to see them on the snow, and this accounts in part for my ill success. Yesterday I walked right into a flock without seeing them until they flew. I also got two pine grosbeaks and two redpolls. The days are growing rapidly longer. Only three months until the spring birds come.

Sunday there were fifty-seven persons at church, including thirty-two white men. A stranger conducted the services in C. C.'s place. Nothing occurred of an unexpected nature excepting the fact that one of our boys went to sleep and snored so loud that it made us all think we were back in the States at church somewhere. Last night we had what Kowak boys call a "great blowout." Brownie made a big wad of taffy and we all pulled at it. By the way, three or four of us were surprised at Christmas by receiving a box each, "straight from home." They had been packed and given into the care of different persons, so that the recipient of each box did not suspect that he was to have one. By some oversight of the party to whom my own was committed, I did not get my Christmas box, but am assured that it is "safe somewhere," and will come to light when somebody stumbles over it. Dr. Coffin received his on time, and the contents have yielded us no end of comfort. Brownie drew upon its nuts and crystallized fruits for his taffy. After the candy was washed off from the table and chairs and candle-sticks and faces and hands, we played a game of crokonole, which lasted far into the night. The result was that I did not have breakfast on time. Miller and I played the doctor and Rivers, the latter combine winning two out of three games after a very close struggle. They had the "ha-ha" on me. The game finally depended on the last shot, which was mine. We both had 195—200 to make. There were three blacks on the board and two whites. The whites are Miller's and mine. I had a fairly good split shot to take off two blacks, which would have given us the odd game by a good margin. Everyone was talking and the opposition was doing its best to "rattle" me. Anyhow, by some extraordinary roundabout, my shot cleared the board of every white

one and put all three blacks in the center ring. Oh, but the howl from the enemy!

Several cases of scurvy are reported along the line. One man is nearly dead. It is supposed to be due to a sameness of diet and two little exercise. Men settle down in their cabins and, not being obliged to go out, just sleep the time away. Dr. Coffin suspects another cause. A poor grade of food-stuffs has been brought up, probably with adulterations. Brownie is just now pounding up lumps of sugar on the table where I am writing. He is using the end of my rolling-pin with great effect and much scattering of sweetness, much to the delight of several Eskimo "mickaninies," who are having an active picnic in consequence.

Feb. 2.—C. C. and party have returned, whole but tired. Besides C. C., Cox and Mr. Samms, there are four fellows from the Upper Agnes Boyd Camp, so that we are pretty well crowded as to sleeping. I had eighteen men to feed for three meals, serving them at two tables. I had to "rustle" for breakfast this morning. Made two big pans of biscuit, a kettle of mush, a mass of salt-horse hash, bacon and gravy. The repast was successful, excepting that the gravy was somewhat salty. It is a great idea this, my cooking for eighteen men, after I have declared "quits" so many times. The fellows laugh now when I "resign."

Scurvy and "black-leg" are getting common up the river. One man at the Jesse Lou Camp has died of the latter. The "black-leg" is what the doctors call phlebitis. Black patches appear on the lower limbs, which swell and become very painful. Many are affected and at some of the camps above us they have instituted regular "scurvy trails," five to ten miles long, which they tramp every day. Exercise and a change of food seem to help and also to prevent the disease. Those who are suffering have been confined to their cabins so long, eating pork and beans and baking-powder bread, to the exclusion of fruit and fresh meats, that their cases are almost hopeless. C. C. reports nothing new above. He and Samms visited the big Indian village at the Par River. C. C. got a black bear skin in trade. Samms took a census of the native population and finds about four hundred and fifty on the Kowak. C. C. had rather a hard trip I guess, but he was anxious to get it. Nothing like having plenty of hardships to relate on one's return home. I expect to do some of the relating myself. He is a pretty heavy man and it would seem could not endure as much as a slender person. But he manages to make it. Last night and to-day we have our heaviest snowfall. Until a thaw comes to form a crust traveling will be difficult. Yesterday the literary was well attended. Mr. Young of the Iowa Camp, talked on "Butter Making and Creamery Methods," and I on the "Bacteria which Assist in the Making of Cheese and Butter." Casey sang two comic songs, "The Irish Jubilee," and "Put Me Off at Buffalo." Miller sang "Just Behind the Times" and "The Queen's Hussars." Miller has a fine voice. The literary is growing more popular as the season advances, and it may well be considered an important factor in helping many of us to pass the winter profitably. We try to bring in subjects which will interest everyone, those who are not literarily inclined as well as the rest, and I think we have been quite successful. It seems to me that the mind must be employed in these long winter evenings at different points of Alaska, as a means of moral and physical health. The doctor and I agree as to this.

Home from the Mission.

Feb. 4.—The other day one of the boys was rummaging about among the stores to see what he could come across of interest piled above the rafters, when he accidentally knocked down a box. It fell to the floor and

one corner burst open, disclosing the contents, which were not "Sugar Corn," as the label on the end indicated. A very insignificant legend near one end read "C. C. Reynolds," and it was set aside as belonging to him. Yesterday it was given to C. C., who at once recognized it as the very Christmas box which had been entrusted to him for me before we left home, by my mother and sister. He turned it over to me with many regrets, etc. It contained everything that could give pleasure to a boy from two years old to twenty-one — from tooters and jumping-jacks to warm woolen hoods and handkerchiefs and books. Stockings were stuffed full of candies corked tightly in bottles and tin boxes, and nuts were profuse. A touch of home-thought mingled with the Arctic storms. I wish we had had it for Christmas on account of the toys and candies, which would have added greatly to the presents on the natives' Christmas tree. The hoods were especially acceptable. They are knit with a piece across the nose, openings only for the eyes and mouth, and are tied under the chin. They fit like the skin itself. The books are all new to our library, which has been pretty thoroughly digested by this time. I brought the three novels out and they were immediately pounced upon. The doctor is reading "A Tennessee Judge," Miller "A Kentucky Colonel," and Mrs. Samms "Oliver Twist." I shall get at them in course of time.

I have read very little of late aside from my physiology. There is a growing faction in our company now favoring an expedition to the Philippines. We have the "Penelope" and sufficient supplies to go around the world, for that matter. For my part I think we ought not to hurry about leaving Alaska. Resolutions in regard to prospecting are dimly waning. Last summer it was, "We will stay in Alaska and push on until we find gold, if it takes three years." In the fall they thought "two years enough." Last month it was, "We will prospect all summer and start for home as late as the boat can leave the Sound." And now it is, "How can we the soonest reach home?" Several men from up the river are going to start overland for St. Michaels. Time, and plenty of it, seems to be an antidote for enthusiasm.

CHAPTER XVI.

FEB. 8.—Mr. and Mrs. Samms left for the Mission yesterday. Harry Reynolds goes with them, and will either stay there or go down to the "Penelope." That lessens our number, but we will still have eleven in the house. C. C. talks of following them later. There will be no more prospecting done by this company this year, except by myself, and that for birds. I got a pair of muckluks in trade, and am now bartering for a pair of snowshoes. The snow is eighteen inches deep and very light and dry. I shot four redpolls near the house this morning. I would like to see it sixty-five degrees below zero just for the experience of it. I have already shot ptarmigan at forty-four degrees below, and could have stood it much colder without wind.

Feb. 11.—It must be admitted that life is getting a little humdrum. There is nothing in particular to write about unless one has a poetic turn. Poetry doesn't come to any of us any more. The poetry is wearing off from the L. B. & A. M. & T. Co.

If I were a Mark Twain, with humor to relate the doings of people about me, I could write a few pages of good reading. Resources are unlimited to the right person applying. The story of our "Fool's Errand" into this out-of-the-way country, if written by an expert, would be as rich a theme as one could desire. But alas! I am only a bird-hunter by nature, and a gold-hunter on the Kowak by grace of my father, and am unable to depict the fortunes of this crowd in an acceptable manner. There is unrest everywhere. All admit that they have been duped. Some are making the best of circumstances, but others are taking it to heart in a pitiful degree. Although for the most part good-natured, chagrin is the rule. There are many pathetic tales half hinted at. Men left families to live as best they might, in vain hope, in narrowed circumstances at home, selling or mortgaging all they possessed to outfit themselves, confidently expecting to return with quickly-acquired wealth. About twenty-five men have lost their lives so far from drowning, freezing or scurvy, several of whom we know to have dependent families at home. It is worse than war, for there is no pension. And then the ridiculousness of this mad rush! How a company of excited men followed an Eskimo three days across the tundras and over the mountains, only to be

shown a little brook with yellow mica glistening in the sandy bed! How another party had a "sure thing," and several others got wind of it and followed, scarcely giving themselves time to sleep, until they all reached the same spot together in a mood to fight, but finally laughed at themselves as if provoked by a humorous ice demon. Several parties paid an old sailor at San Francisco forty dollars each for a "tip" as to the exact spot where gold had been dug out, "fifteen thousand dollars in two hours with a jack-knife"! They all met at the supposed place. We have had the laugh on them many times, though I fail to see the exact grounds. The ludicrous sometimes changes to the doleful even while I am laughing.

"We paid $600 apiece for our tip," someone says. Several have owned up that they followed the "Penelope" crowd into this country believing that we had "a sure thing;" and the missionaries told us that it has been rumored that nearly five hundred men came into the Sound last summer following our "scent." I cannot see anything "funny" about it, though some do.

After Whitefish.

Feb. 12.—This morning after breakfast I amused myself about an hour before service by paying strict attention to affairs about me in the cabin. It is astonishing how entertaining the meaningless, helter-skelter, careless conversation can be. And yet there are points. We are all doing something, if only yawning or looking out of the frosty window.

C. C. is clipping Cox's whiskers and makes inaudible remarks. Rivers is shaving, just like any Christian of a Sunday morning. Miller, Alec, Clyde, Casey, Brownie and the doctor are reading. I am writing at the table. Uncle Jimmy is standing by the stove with his hands in his pockets, facing the window and whistling. A pail of water is set into the top of the heating stove and sizzles in varying tones. All is quiet for a while, when positions are changed. Ablutions are going on behind closed canvas. Uncle Jimmy sits down on a bench and pulls his beard in a slow, rhythmical motion. He is abstracted. Cox fills a stew-pail with water, pieces of ice striking the sides with a tinkling sound, and puts it on the cook stove. Uncle Jimmy gets his Bible and sits down at the table, spending several moments in wiping his spectacles. He reads a verse and pushes his specs high up on his forehead, rests his head on his hand and dozes off. Casey and Cox exchange some words about a "shirt" that has shrunken in washing. Rivers takes the thermometer and goes outdoors. Returns, saying that it is "thirty below," and bids me put that in my diary. Clyde brings his camera outfit to the window and explains what the several pictures represent. Cox asks me to "blow out the lamp if I don't need it," which I do. Cox gets a book and sits down near the window. He lights his big corn-cob and, after puffing several dense clouds of smoke, asks, "Will I disturb you smoking, Uncle Jimmy?" The latter says, "Oh, no; oh, no!" Rivers gets "Hamlet" and sits down to the table to read. C. C. is in his bedroom humming a tune. Ceases humming and whistles; is again humming; whistles; sings. The doctor gets up, saying, "Uncle Jimmy, I didn't know I took your Bible." Goes into bedroom and puts on hood and mittens. Says he is "going up to see Bentz." And the morning passes, while I see and hear much more of no greater importance than what I have recorded. Half-past eleven the natives and "cabloonas" begin to arrive for church. C. C. speaks, and as usual we all listen.

Is it monotonous, does one think who has not spent months in a cabin with the same faces and the same voices and the same routine of endless twilight? I marvel how some who have not inward resources can endure it.

I let "Cingato" have my shot-gun yesterday, and he brought me four ptarmigan, two of which were the rock ptarmigan, which I have not before taken. I wanted to skin them to-day, but Uncle Jimmy wouldn't let me. If I insisted Casey said I might, from Uncle Jimmy's threatening look, "precipitate a rough house." I put the birds away to freeze until to-morrow, so there is no further danger of a "rough house."

Last night we had the most beautiful aurora of the winter. The more brilliant display was south of the zenith, although there was scarcely a part of the sky which was not illuminated at some time. Broad curtains of pale blue light seemed suspended

On a Journey.

in the heavens. They were constantly changing in form and intensity, and waves slowly swept across them as if they were disturbed by a breeze. The lower edge was the brighter, and alternate light and shadow chased each other endlessly from west to east. The effect was like that of a stage with the curtain drawn, with a succession of persons passing in front of the footlights. And then there were ribbons of light sweeping slowly across the sky. These bands were often abruptly broken and continued at right angles with the other section. Little patches of light, like a fleecy cloud in a sunny sky, appeared for a few minutes, to gradually fade out again. There was no moon, and yet the landscape was illuminated as if by the brightest moonlight, but there were no shadows.

Feb. 17.—Alec, Miller and Casey started back up the river and Brownie went with them. The four "Agnes Boyd" boys who came down with C. C. also went up, and two of the Hanson boys with them. Yesterday Casey, Clyde and three of the Iowa people also left, and will catch up with the first party at Ambler City. Alec, Miller, Clyde and Brown will return in a month. The party had two sleds and four dogs. The cabin seems almost empty. We have had from eleven to eighteen sleeping and eating here for the past month or more, and now we are only six. The comparative quiet is a relief and I shall be able to do more studying. I want to read some more books as well. I expect we shall be few in numbers from now on. When Alec and Miller get back from the upper camp they, with C. C. and Rivers, are planning to go down to the vessel at Escholtz Bay. Casey, our engineer, will stick by the "Helen" until the river opens. I am going to stay here until the "Helen" picks me up on her way to the Sound. I can do more work in the spring collecting, with a warm cabin to dry specimens in, than chasing over the country prospecting, with a will-o'-the-wisp in view. The weather is very gloomy. The air is heavy with mist and full of a fine frost which falls constantly. The sun, although it shines for seven hours a day, doesn't get far enough above the horizon to get in its genial work. It was forty-five degrees below zero this morning and we stay in the cabin. Last week Rivers and I were relieved from culinary duties and Cox took our place. Coxie proves himself to be the best cook the Long Beach and Alaska Mining and Trading Company has produced. We feel our loss in not having discovered his talents in this line before. He has been too modest. His art shall no longer be in obscurity.

He sits straddle of the stove all day long concocting original dishes and improving upon old ones. He gives us a quarter of a pie apiece three times a day, and as much as we want between meals. His bread is perfect. We had the finest kind of fried eggs for breakfast — fish eggs. The only impediment to his cooking, to my mind, is his inability to make mush. It is too thin. We have made a fortunate deal with the Hanson Company, who have fifty tons of provisions in their storehouse here, to get all the extra grub we need until summer. Their steamer, the "Agnes Boyd," is nearly

buried in a "glacier creek," and it will probably fall to the "Helen" to ship their possessions down next summer. I was down to the San Jose cabin for dinner. We were served to an individual can apiece of sauerkraut and sausages steaming hot. I had been hunting across the tundra for several miles through the snow, and my appetite was as keen as C. C.'s razor after he has stropped it on a section of the belt which was made at home and fastened around his waist with the charge that on no account was it to be taken off unless he was found dead in the snow. It has his name on it for identification. Guy Solsbury has just come up with Dr. Coffin to stay with us for a few days' visit. We have plenty of room now, and are ready to receive in decent style.

A Child in the Cabin.

Feb. 20, 12 o'clock noon.—Cox and Rivers and I are the only ones in the room. The rest are cutting wood. The sunshine is flooding the cabin with light, although the thermometer shows forty degrees below zero. One of our Eskimo neighbors, "Poth-luk," is visiting us, probably more for the benefit he derives from the stove than from a particularly friendly feeling. His little girl is with him, and is romping around the room like any white child. "Kop-puk" is the prettiest native child I have seen. She is "four snows old," so Poth-luk tells me. Her costume is typically Eskimo — a heavy deerskin parka with a big hood, lined with wolverine, strips of minkskin hanging from her shoulders and waist, and deerskin commuks. Her hood lies back from her head exposing her black hair, cut bang-wise in front. Her face is round and fat and her mouth really very pretty. She has shining dark brown eyes and perfectly white teeth. At this moment she is playing "peek-a-boo" with me from behind a chair. Her laughing face, surrounded by the broad fringe of wolverine fur, and her chubby figure, make a pretty picture. I would like to take her home with me. But what could I do with her? If taken from her native climate she would probably soon die.

We have a new lounge, which invites indigence in an already lazy crowd. I have read over and over the six letters I received in the New Year's mail. It will be six months yet before we get any more. We heard from an Indian that Harry R. and Samms had reached the Orphans' Home safely, though they have had hard traveling. Saturday night Brownie, Clyde, two of the Iowa boys and one Hansonite returned, having given up the trip. They only went fifteen miles up the river. The snow is so deep they had to carry the sled in some places, and those who are continuing with it have to double up with the loads; that is, go over the road twice in order to get the entire load up. They will have a rough time. Brownie came near freezing to death and had to return. This gave the other boys who came with him an excuse for returning. Brownie has been around home all winter, not exercising much, and was not sufficiently hardened for such a trip. The first day, after they had been out but a few hours, he sat down exhausted and said he would come on as soon as he had rested a few minutes (the old

Our Artist Snowed In.

story). The boys had presence of mind to know what the real matter was and tried to get him to walk on, but he completely collapsed and became unconscious. They quickly unloaded the sled and several went on ahead to prepare the tent and get a fire going, while the rest got Brownie on the

sled and hauled him to camp. He was finally restored, but a few minutes more and another would have been added to the Kowak silent ones. It was thirty-five degrees below zero, not so very cold, but his feet and face were frozen. The boys plied the art of thawing him out so well that he will lose nothing but some skin. He makes a pretty picture with a black nose. His toes are sore, too. Nothing will induce him to leave the cabin again. It is no use making light of it, it is dangerous traveling unless one is in the best physical condition and with proper clothes and outfit. The rest of the party are used to it, and we have no fear for their safety. So many together can take care of each other. Brownie says that when he sat down to rest he only felt tired and a little numb. This numbness crept on him with little pain until he gradually lost perception. He says he "felt good" and didn't like to be disturbed. He lost all power of movement and speech until he was warmed up and rubbed for two or three hours. Death by freezing must be very easy and pleasant. Perhaps it is easier to die almost any death than we suspect. I must have an argument with the doctor about that.

Saturday brought me a new experience — that of writing a sick man's will. B., who lives alone in a little cabin near the first Iowa Camp, is very sick and will probably die. He dictated his will to me, in the presence of Uncle Jimmy as witness. It apportions all his goods and possessions here, which are all he has in the world, among the residents of this community, naming in particular several who have waited upon him. Dr. Coffin is willed his dory. B. is a queer character. He is more or less insane, evidently from drink. The way he begs for hypodermic injections of cocaine and morphine indicates that he may have been a "dope fiend." He has been here since last summer. For some time previous his record was not sustaining, but his people thought he might be benefited by a change of climate. He says his folks are well off and he doesn't want any of his things sent home. The different camps are sharing in his care now, and he may live indefinitely. His legs are affected very much like the scurvy victim's, though the doctors do not call it that. Several of the people have frost-bitten cheeks, but otherwise this is a healthy neighborhood. What little sickness we have had tends to make the well ones kind and charitable and helpful. They chop wood for one another and in many ways give evidence of having sprung from a long line of Christian ancestors. I have heard that this is the case always and everywhere at mining camps. And ours is a mining camp.

CHAPTER XVII.

FEB. 24, Friday, 9 p. m.—I went hunting for the first time on snowshoes. I got along famously until I struck a soft snowdrift, and the shoes turned on edge and I fell headlong. Otherwise I received no casualties and got over the ground rapidly, skirting the brushy margins of lakes back on the tundra and following up the creeks. I shot three rock ptarmigan, and learned many interesting items about their notes and habits, which are duly set down in my special bird notes. The weather is calm and clear and cold, ranging from fifteen to fifty-one degrees in the twenty-four hours.

Wednesday afternoon the literary was again well attended, as we had a very interesting programme. Dr. Coffin had arranged the east end of the room in a patriotic manner, the designs being his own. A large flag made of a red blanket with parallel stripes of white cheese cloth folded across it, and in the corner a square of blue mosquito netting with paper stars pinned on it, formed the background. On a platform in front of this were stacked three guns, one an old rusted muzzle-loader which C. C. found out in the woods, one an old-fashioned breech-loader, and the third a modern nitro-repeater, to represent the three great wars — the Revolutionary, the Civil, and the Spanish. On the wall were magazine cuts of Schley, Sampson, Dewey, Hobson, and other heroes, while in the center of the blanket flag was a large picture of George and Martha Washington.

Mr. Legg, of the Jesse Lou Camp, gave a talk on Honduras, where he was a banana grower some years ago. Several George Washington speeches followed, by Solsbury, Jury, Thees, C. C., and others. Just at the close of the meeting Uncle S. came blustering in from up the river. He brought a lot of news that kept the people here until late in the night. Two or three more men have been frozen to death. Several have scurvy. Our boys were at Ambler City waiting for the weather to moderate before going on up. There has been absolutely no gold heard from. There are thousands of men in the lower Yukon regions, one hundred and fifty steamers and various kinds of launches

along the Koyukuk alone, and no encouraging prospects. Hundreds of men haven't a cent to pay their passage back to the States. One good thing makes affairs better than they might be — there is plenty to eat in the country. It is said that a good many have signed a petition to the government to come and get them out of their trouble.

We feel pretty sure of our return tickets. But the "Penelope" is at the mercy of Arctic demons, and if she is saved it will be marvelous.

Feb. 26, Sunday.—I will confess that I did not behave well in church this morning. I took a seat over in the corner behind Rivers, where I thought my scribbling would not be noticed, and there I am writing. I guess no one will be harmed by it unless it be myself. 10:30 a. m., and the first arrivals for meeting are Charley Lund and Beam of the first Iowa Camp—that is, representing the white population. Services are supposed to begin at eleven, but two benches of Eskimo are already seated. They are quite well behaved, but keep up an incessant jabbering. Charley Lund, Beam and the doctor are holding an animated conversation about the sick man B. B. is a good deal better.

Guy Solsbury and Normandin of the Hanson Camp have just arrived, all muffled up, their masks thickly frosted. It is forty-five degrees below zero, but they report that their three-mile walk was "quite comfortable." Normandin brought me a big box nicely finished with cover and shallow trays, for my skins. It is in trade for a stuffed ptarmigan. He is quite a genius in the mechanical line. The box was rather too heavy to carry, so he fastened a pair of runners on blocks at the bottom and dragged it up by a rope tied to a handle on one end. Lyman comes in with his clarionet case under his arm. Dr. Gleaves and D. arrive, and then Young, Dougherty and Montgomery, from the middle Iowa cabin, and Legg of the Jesse Lou, who is staying with them. Several more natives come in with friendly "Halloas!" "Big Jones" from the further Iowa Camp arrives, and Brennan and Malcolm from the Sunnyside. Brennan is nicknamed "Noisy," because he is always very quiet and has nothing to say to anyone. Remarks as to the "cold weather," wooden snow-glasses and snowshoes, are numerous. The conversation is mainly desultory, carried on piecemeal from opposite sides of the room. But there is a low hum from two or three couples who are carrying on a more earnest conversation. Dr. Coffin and Dr. Gleaves, for instance, I overhear discussing Fish's condition. Fish is the man whose toes were amputated. One can see that Sunday services on the Kowak are rather of a social nature. The orchestra begins to tune up; general silence falls on the congregation, and individuals seek permanent seats. Dr. Coffin gives out the song books, of which C. C. brought plenty. The orchestra consists of the banjo by C. C., violin by Normandin, and clarionet by Lyman. There is some delay and more tuning of the banjo and clarionet, which do not seem to jibe (to use a musical term). A low buzz of conversation is again audible, and the leaves of the hymn books rustle. Several of the natives have colds and there is considerable coughing. It is very quiet; sort of an air of suspense. The sunshine streaming across the room, reflected from yellow Mackinaw suits, gives a brownish tint to the scene. Normandin and C. C. are discoursing "sharps" and "flats" in a low voice, yet audible in the room. The violin and banjo are not quite tuned together. Solsbury is talking aloud about "Moth balls in furs, back in the States." At last C. C. announces the number of the hymn in a loud, hurried voice, as though he were just startled out of a reverie, "No. 17, Jesus Saves." The clarionet sounds the pitch and C. C. leads in the singing. The time is awfully slow. Nearly everyone sings, the Eskimos following the air nearly as well as the whites. Although many sing out of tune, and individually would make a horrible discord, the aggregation is a somewhat musical droning of a quality that would soon put one to sleep. After four verses of this hymn, "No. 64" is announced, "Wait and Murmur Not." Some further tuning, and four verses of this hymn are gone through with. They always do sing all the verses of any hymn. Dr. Coffin now rises and reads the second chapter of Matthew. Mr. D. is in charge of the meeting to-day, and he calls on Mr. W. to "lead in prayer." Uncle Jimmy slowly rises, takes a step or two forward, clasps his hands in front of him, and, closing his eyes, raises his face slightly. He is a good man and I like to see and hear him pray. I haven't anything against Uncle Jimmy. When anyone prays the Eskimos always bow their heads low, resting their elbows on their knees. They say "Amen" in unison when the prayer is finished. So much is the result of Mr. and Mrs. Samms' missionary work. Uncle Jimmy terminates with the

Lord's Prayer, in which all join. When the praying is over there is quite a hubbub of coughing and sneezing. C. C. announces "No. 49," and the orchestra tunes, "There shall be showers of blessing," four verses. The clarionet doesn't seem to know this very well and makes several breaks. Toward the end of the last verse the hymn-books are closed and there is a general settling down. D. rises and, after a pause, proceeds to apologize for his inability as a public speaker. But he tells us he will do the best he can, and we ask for nothing more. His subject is "The Divinity of Christ." I should like to take down the various points, but my continued scratching is noisy and attracts attention. I might get taken out of meeting by the ear and so suffer for being a "naughty little boy." A couple of men came in late during the sermon and caused some disturbance until they finally got seated, mopping the melting ice from their beards. D. winds up his discourse with a prayer. The most of his sermon was written, and delivered in his usual halting manner, but the substance was good for any location and showed that he had given a good deal of study to his subject. After the prayer and a chorus of "Amens" from the natives, who haven't understood a word of what was said, there is a sort of recovery, with coughing and clearing of throats and shuffling of feet. "No. 139" is announced, "Bringing in the sheaves," three verses. C. C. starts another song, which he observes "will be familiar to the natives." "No. 39, At the Cross." The Eskimos catch a tune quite readily, the women and children carrying the air very nicely. They try hard to imitate the words. Two verses conclude this song. "No. 14, Jesus, I Come," is announced. It is a new piece and is sung very scatteringly. Guy Solsbury calls for "Sunshine." He thinks it appropriate, because at this moment the sunshine is flooding the room with more than usual brightness. But C. C. says he hasn't the music, so the orchestra can't play it. C. C. asks all to rise, and he prays and gives the benediction. The congregation slowly disperses, little knots remaining to discuss various topics. Legg declares he will not go back to the Jesse Lou until the weather moderates. Thus with gossip and swapping of news the Kowak Sunday services are finally ended and the room is cleared in time for the 2 o'clock dinner.

Church Service at Cape Blossom in July.

March 3.—I have been pretty busy today. Got up just in time for breakfast, which I don't have to get any more, for a while at least, and took my snowshoes up to the village to be mended. Then Rivers and I went ptarmigan hunting. We tramped across the tundras from eight till two, bagging two ptarmigan and a redpoll. It was tiresome. In the ravines where the wind did not strike, the snow was soft and deep and hard to get over even with snowshoes. Rivers wore snowshoes for the first time, and he got several tumbles, but always struck in a soft place.

We got into a large flock of ptarmigan which kept flying around us, but, after two or three shots, our hands became too cold and we had to give them up. My mitts were sweaty, and froze while I had them off shooting, and when I put them on again my hands nearly became frosted. It is too cold for comfortable hunting. When we got back we were late for dinner, but Coxie got us a fine lunch, hot pea soup, biscuits, and apple cobbler. After dinner I put up two ptarmigan skins that I shot last Tuesday. Rivers is learning how to skin birds now. He expects to go down to Escholtz Bay pretty soon to be with the vessel when the ice breaks up, and will collect eggs and skins for me there. I would like to turn the whole company

into an egg collecting concern for a month in May and June. But I guess the doctor and Rivers are the only ones who will take much active interest. Last night I had a very nice dream. The first swallows had come. There were barn swallows and bank swallows flying along the river and I was after them. Before many weeks this is just what will happen. It will be an exciting time for me. More exciting than gold hunting.

Monday was my birthday, and there was quite a celebration in the cabin. The first thing in the morning, before I was fairly awake, I was attacked by the doctor, and we had a five-minute squabble, pitched high. At the close of the seance he claimed to have given me twenty-two spanks. They were more in the nature of bunts and kicks than square spanks. I made the doctor lots of hard work. We rolled around the floor and under the bed and on the beds, and tore things up generally, including Brownie, who got in the road with his sore leg. At breakfast Coxie served me a big bowl of oatmeal mush. We had been out of mush material for a long time, much to my personal sorrow, as all the boys and most of the neighbors well know. Mr. Lyman, hearing of my birthday, kindly sent me in a package of oatmeal. Good birthday present that!

I also received a birthday box from home, smuggled like the Christmas box, not to be opened until the day appointed. There was everything in it—games, books, candies, duly bottled and boxed, etc. We all had a treat. At dinner a big platter of ptarmigan was set at my place (some I had shot), and all in all it was a very pleasant occasion. A birthday in the Arctics, on the banks of the mighty Kowak, is not often the thing that happens to a fellow.

Wednesday, at the literary, C. C. talked on "Reminiscences of an Undertaker." It was very interesting, being his favorite and familiar theme. It was held at the Hanson Camp, and I remained as guest of Guy Solsbury. Jack Messing and Joe Jury came here and visited our boys at the same time. We have to visit about these cold nights and sleep under one cover when possible. Blankets are none too plentiful.

Normandin mended my shot-gun, which had lost a rivet, for which I paid him the sum of a stuffed ptarmigan. Everybody wants ptarmigan skins now, but I have to be rather "stingy," as I am frequently told, or else I won't have a ghost of a "series" to take home for comparison. Home! When?

CHAPTER XVIII.

MARCH 7, 1899.—I have succeeded at last in trading for two pairs of snowshoes, from some Eskimos who have just come up the river. The dickering engaged the entire afternoon, and I am completely exhausted. It is a stupendous undertaking to attempt to trade for anything. The natives want the earth, and then "some more." The following is an illustration of the proceedings: An Indian brings in a pair of snowshoes and we all rush to see them, commenting on their size and quality. "Mickaninny" (too small); "anganinny" (too big); "naguruk" (good); "caprok pechak" (string loose); "byme by fixem." And then "capsinic" (how much?) The native invariably replies, "You speak." You can never make an Indian state what he wants. You begin by offering him "sox." "Konga" (no). He wants "cow cow" (something to eat). "Flour?" "Capsinic flour?" "Neleuea" (I don't know). Being urged on flour, the native intimates "two sacks." "Oh, apazh, apazh" (too much). One sack flour all right? "No, too small." The Indian then proceeds to look over the sack of flour brought for his inspection and he finds "potoa" (hole). After this is sewed up he finds that it has been wet at one end and the flour is a little caked in advance at the bottom. He therefore states that the whole thing is "no good," and "dauxic pechak" (no trade). He wants bacon, "so long and so broad," indicating the measurements in the air with hands. "No, we pechak" (haven't any for him). Then I bring out a shirt to add to the sack of flour. He looks at the shirt and finds a torn place. "Stoney-house" (no good).

Coming to Trade.

"Stoney-house" means torn or broken, and has a queer derivation. Fort Cosmos is called stoney-house by the natives, because Lieutenant Stoney and his party wintered there in 1884. The cabin they lived in at Fort Cosmos (there is no fort or anything else there now) is all broken down. So, with an Eskimo, "All same stoney-house," or simply "stoney-house," means broken.

After two hours of sweating and bargain-

ing the trade is consummated, and the "calboona" is satisfied. It is much to the relief of both parties. From the foregoing it will be plainly seen that a native is amply able to care for his own interests, and has learned from a probably bitter experience to "look a leetle out."

I got a very nice pair of snowshoes to take home as curiosities for one sack of flour and a pair of socks, and another pair, stronger but not so prettily made, for everyday use, for a half sack of flour and half a pound of tea. This is very reasonable and some under winter prices. Snowshoes make nice wall decorations for halls and dining-rooms, with a suitable picture stuck in them where the foot belongs.

Wednesday, March 8.—Our extremely cold weather is at an end, I hope. But it is more disagreeable outside. I put up a spruce grouse and two redpolls this afternoon. Birds are becoming noisier and, I presume, happier and in better spirits as the sunshine increases. An Alaskan three-toed woodpecker drums taps on a dead spruce near the cabin every morning. The jays are quiet, but have a stealthy, sly manner which indicates that they are about to engage in nest-building. Rivers has finished up two ptarmigan skins in fair shape. He is very painstaking and I hope he gets some good specimens down on the coast. I have everyone posted as to keeping birds and eggs for me, and, with this generous promise of help, I ought to obtain some rare things this spring.

The literary met this afternoon, with good attendance and a talk "On the Eye" by Dr. Gleaves. A week ago the other officers and myself thought our terms of office had about expired, so we "resigned," and our successors were elected; Joe Jury, president; Clyde, secretary; Young, vice-president. To-day, as I was retiring from the chair, Dr. Coffin arose and, after a most elaborate speech, presented me with a gavel. He spoke of its rare value on account of its associations, and grew quite sentimental. It was part of a birch tree, chopped down by Uncle Jimmy near our winter home "on the Kowak far away." Dr. Coffin selected the pieces and worked them down. The head was turned by Normandin on the famous grindstone lathe of the San Jose cabin. Joe Jury worked the crank, yielding "two barrels of sweat by measure," and Dr. Coffin turned the handle and finished up the gavel. It is a very valuable and beautiful souvenir to be kept "as long as memory lasts."

Joe Jury took the chair which I had vacated to-day and made things lively, using a big hand-ax for a gavel and otherwise making this, probably our final meeting, a merry one. Several of the Kowak men are about to leave. Nine of the Sunnysiders started up yesterday with their sled loads. They have lots of courage and perseverance, but I doubt their making the mountain passes with their supplies. Solsbury and Joe Jury start down to-morrow on a three weeks' trip to look after the condition of their barge, sixty-eight miles below us. Dr. Gleaves and the boys from "Quality Hill" are getting ready for a hunting trip across to the Naatak. Oh, I believe I have not made previous mention of Quality Hill. It is an interesting spot, the cabin being occupied by four young men of the aristocracy. They have been exclusive, as became men of their distinction. Few of us have been on intimate terms with them, but they are said to lie in their bunks until twelve o'clock noon, and to stay up, when once out, until two the following morning. They divert themselves by shooting at mice which run across the floor, using their six-shooters. Various boxes and knot-holes about the walls of their residence suggest targets. The walls themselves are riddled with bullet holes. They are said to have trained a young Eskimo as personal attendant, who does all the work of the cabin, building fires, bringing wood and water, and even cooking. He sleeps on the floor, so that he may be handy to rekindle the fires of a cold night. The first man to arouse in the morning tosses a boot or other article at the native servant, which reminds him of his domestic duties. He blacks their muckluks, it is rumored, and serves coffee and cigars in bed. They live in style on Quality Hill. Thus even the remote Kowak has its aristocratic society.

March 10.—I put up five more rock ptarmigan to-day. They are difficult to skin and it is slow work, and their being pure white makes it necessary to be extra nice with them. I have already used more than half of my supply of plaster-of-paris and the migrations have not begun. I use this plaster in cleaning the skins.

Yesterday the doctor and I went hunting for three hours in the forenoon and secured eight ptarmigan. It was pleasant when we started, but after a while the north wind blew. We were about to return when we discovered a flock of ptarmigan on a hillside.

The fine snow was driving along the ground in a continuous blinding stream. The birds squatted down close in the snow, facing the wind, evidently tired. They paid little attention to us until we were within easy

The Doctor Makes a Good Start—

shot, when they rose and, after a short flight, settled again. I felt sorry to take advantage of them, they are usually so wary. The doctor wore his snowshoes for the first time and on the whole got along pretty well. Once, however, he got mixed up in a snowdrift. He tripped, the pointed heel of one shoe stuck, and down went the toe of the other. He plunged head first into the snow, where he could scarcely move. During the progress of his wallowing his shot-gun got crammed full of snow, and he poked it out just in time to see four ptarmigan fly past.

March 15, 9 a. m.—It has been storming three days. This morning the wind is roaring among the trees louder than ever, and the snow fills the air so thickly one cannot see a hundred yards. It is warmer, however, as it always is with an east wind; warmer than we have seen it since last September. I have been on my first hunt for jay's nests. When it is cloudy one can see through the foliage of the spruces more readily than when the sun shines, throwing shadows everywhere. Last week several of the "Amblerites" came down. They report many cases of scurvy at Ambler City, and they came to our camps to get tomatoes, fruit and pickles. They are now stormbound, and two of them, Phillips and La Voy, are with us. They will have hard sledding back again unless it thaws enough to form a crust. Money is very scarce up here now and provisions and clothing are below par. With half the money we spent in the States one could buy up a good outfit. If one could only see ahead! But in that case we would not have been here, and I should probably never have seen the spring migrations on the Kowak. An ill wind that blows nobody any good.

March 18.—The cloudy weather continues. The warmth from the room is penetrating the roof and the water is dripping through in several places. The frost and ice in the lean-to are melting, making a sloppy place. Icicles hang down from above, like stalactites in a cave, and slippery cones rise from the floor like stalagmites. The snow is about two feet deep on the level and is soft and damp, making walking even with snowshoes difficult. I went into the woods this morning a few hundred yards, wading in snow above my knees, which was tiring. I got a shot at a raven, but lost it. I heard a woodpecker drumming and a couple of pine grosbeaks calling. I long for the time when the birds will arrive. Every moment will be

But Finds Himself in a Changed Position.

precious then, but the time hangs a little heavy now. I am glad I have something to look forward to. "Looking forward to something" is about half the pleasure of

life. I have compiled my last year's bird notes, have loaded all my shells, gotten boxes ready, and still must wait. I spend some of the time in getting as much information from the natives as possible about the birds. They know the natural history of the region pretty well, and but for their superstitions would be of practical service to me. I have been looking for jay's nests and watching these birds for several days now. I cannot induce the natives to hunt for me, or even to tell me of nests. They tell me that if a person looks at the eggs of a jay or spruce grouse he will surely "mucky" (die). They firmly believe what they say. Kallak told me that a man who lived in her father's igloo several snows ago, looked into a jay's nest and promptly went "mucky." Doctor Charley tells me the same thing, except that if the person who disturbs the nest shoots one of the parent birds and, holding it behind his back, extracts the entrails and throws them away out of his sight, he possibly may not die. I am afraid it will be hard for me to obtain assistance from these people at the time when I shall most need it, and which I had fondly hoped for all along.

March 20.—My eyes are smarting with snow blindness while I write. They feel full of sand. To-day the sun shone and the glare was dreadful. Last evening I went down to the Hanson camp and spent the night with Dr. Gleaves, and to-day have been hunting jays. I found one nest just started and feel very much elated. It was only by accident that I found it, for the birds are so shy. I saw a jay flying in the direction of a strip of spruces, but lost sight of it on account of intervening timber. I did not see the birds again, but followed in the direction of their flight, keeping up a systematic search through the spruces. By chance I caught sight of a small aggregation of twigs in a young tree, which, by a few tell-tale feathers clinging around the edge, gave me the scent. The nest was not more than half built and I made haste to leave the vicinity so as not to disturb the birds. I think the full set of eggs will be ready in about three weeks. This, with the snow several feet deep and the landscape white! I returned to Dr. Gleaves' in time for dinner at two o'clock, and was treated to "Gleaves' Justly Celebrated," which is an original soup of the doctor's own concoction.

After a half day's tramp on snowshoes through deep, damp snow, one enjoys a dinner of the "Gleaves' consomme," hash, baked sweet potato and sweet corn.

Last night an Eskimo died at the village, and every savage neighbor of the deceased has moved into tents out of their warm igloos, which are vacated for good. They are all going to move across the river and put up wick-i-ups. The person who died was an old woman who went by the natural route of old age. She was dragged out of her igloo a few yards and left in the snow, for the dogs to eat up, we are told, as she had no especial friends. C. C.'s instinct was aroused, and he and Dr. Coffin went up to attend to the ceremonies. Wonderful to relate, the undertaker did not bury the body, but put it on a scaffold in true native style. He is being convinced that this is the proper form of burial. It is expected that he will institute the same on his return to California.

March 24.—Guy Solsbury and Joe Jury returned from their trip to look after the barge. Guy has some big stories to relate about their "perilous trip," which is the identical one Cox and I made last New Year's. They have been absent two weeks, part of the time snowed in. We shall probably have a full account of it in the San Jose "Mercury" next summer. It will bring the mercury down. Colclough came up with them. He had been to the Mission, and brought us a letter from Harry Reynolds and Captain Delano, who report everything "all right." Several men have lately come down the Kowak. The word from everywhere, Naatak, Buckland, Allashook, Koyukuk, and the entire Kowak region, is "nothing." Men are waiting impatiently for spring to open up so they can "go home." C. C., Rivers and Clyde are now waiting for the boys to come down from the upper camp, when they will all go down to the "Penelope." There is little of note going on about the cabin these days. We have altogether too much sunshine. The doctor and I were hunting ptarmigan Thursday. We tramped seven hours and never saw a bird save a few redpolls and a small squad of chickadees. As a result of his tramp the doctor is laid up with snow blindness. I am not so far affected. I cannot hunt with snow-glasses on, as they dim the vision. But I have some natural advantage. My ancestors, who did not hunt ptarmigan on the Kowak, bequeathed to me a pair of rather deep-set eyes with roofing brows, which are the best protection.

"Doctor Charley," the Eskimo who received so much kindness from Dr. Coffin last fall, has been anxious to return the courtesy, and yesterday his opportunity came.

The doctor was attacked with snow blindness with great suffering. Dr. Charley called on him professionally, and advised him to try a treatment at the hands of his wife, who was a specialist in eye cases of this nature. The doctor was ready to submit to almost anything at the hands of his friends, thinking that perhaps they might possess some secret worthy of note. Such proved to be the case. Indian Charley's wife called and looked at the patient's eyes, swollen and inflamed and painful to a degree. She pointed to some toothpicks on the cabin table, and, being told to "proceed," she whittled three of them to a sharp point. Handing one to the suffering doctor, she bade him thrust it into his nostril. He did so and found to his astonishment that the mucous membrane was without sensation. Obeying his doctress, he continued to thrust in the point of this pick and likewise the two others, when a hemorrhage of considerable severity occurred. This was the thing greatly to be desired. In an hour the nose was inflamed and very painful, but the eyes were relieved. After a few hours both nose and eyes were normal, and the doctor believes the operation rational. He declares that he will practice it upon himself and others at the first opportunity. When he returns to California he will doubtless hang out his sign as "Specialist on Snow Blindness." Only there is no snow in California. I will remind him of this fact.

We have a "scurvy trail" now, and every day it is traveled. There are two cases at the Los Angeles Camp. Our boys keep busy at something. Rivers started the idea of making rustic furniture, and several others followed. This resulted in a search through the woods nearly every day for crooked birch sticks. Piles of these awkward "crooks" adorn our back yard, only a select few ever coming up to all the requirements of a "natural crook." They might be of some use as stove wood, but it is impossible to get at them with a saw. The doctor spent days and days whittling out candlesticks, and so must C. C. It is nice to have something to keep the people busy. It helps time to limp by. One of our "best and bravest" walks the floor as if he had the toothache, he is so homesick. He will not let Eskimo Charley treat him for nostalgia.

March 30.—To-day the crowd left for the Mission. They are C. C., Clyde, Cox, Rivers, Alec and a Mr. Driggs, a stranger. The most of them will stay on the "Penelope" at Escholtz Bay, and be on hand there to help when the ice breaks up. Miller, who came down from the upper camp, will remain here with us. That leaves us five, Dr. Coffin, Uncle Jimmy, Brownie, Miller and myself. It is a relief after the congestion. Yesterday we had seventeen for dinner. The doctor is trying his hand at cooking now. He is a specialist on toasted cheese and macaroni. We expect to have this combination served up three times a day, or until the material is exhausted. We each seem to have our culinary idiosyncrasies; Cox for light bread and pea soup; Rivers for beans; C. C. for pie; and I for mush and hash.

This man Driggs has joined our company till we get back to the States. He is a sailor and navigator, with captain's papers, and may be of use to us later. We have also another prospective addition to our numbers, a Mr. Van Dyke, a preacher. He will join us in the spring and take passage on the "Penelope." He knows of a "sure thing." He says that on his way up here last year his party stopped on the mainland near Sledge Island, and he and another man in three hours panned out two dollars' worth of gold from a creek bed. He had the gold in a bottle last fall and some of our boys examined it.

That is certainly a much better prospect than we have heard of this side of Circle City; that is, that we have any reason to rely on. He joins us under the condition that we furnish him passage back to the States if nothing results, but he promises to take us to this place within two days, towing up a stream from the coast, and he firmly believes himself that he has a "sure thing." We shall see. We have heard so many stories of this sort that even a preacher cannot arouse much enthusiasm. However, we have taken up his offer and will sail for the place indicated as soon as the "Penelope" can get away from her moorings. I'd give five dollars for the chance to pan out two dollars' worth of gold-dust.

Oh, yes, Van Dyke says that he met an Indian near Sledge Island who had nuggets, and took him to a spot covered many feet by a snowdrift, which he assured him was a mother lode, or something that sounded very nice. Ah, I'd like to see a mother lode! She's what we are after.

CHAPTER XIX.

APRIL 2, Sunday.—Evidently our Kowak church is dwindling. Only fifteen in attendance to-day. In C. C.'s absence Dr. Coffin and Uncle Jimmy conducted services. Van Dyke also took part. Miller and Van Dyke sang a duet, "Though Your Sins be as Scarlet." It was as fine as anything I remember to have heard anywhere. And this in our little cabin on the lonely Kowak! It snows a great deal and the north

Ancient Indian Grave.

wind blows. Collecting is slow and birds are scarce. I got a couple of Siberian chickadees the other day. They are good birds to have, an Asiatic species which boils over into Alaska a little. This makes three species of chickadees I have found here—the long-tailed, Hudsonian and Siberian. Woodpeckers are drumming on the dead spruces, but I take care to keep away from them. Miller continues to be my partner in taxidermy. We are planning to stop at Dutch Harbor next winter.

April 12.—Busy days are beginning to come and I have less time for my diary. We get more sunshine than is convenient. To-day is cooler, fifteen degrees below zero again. We used to think there wasn't much snow in this country, but are learning our mistake. It snows every day and is three feet deep on a level. The doctor and I spent the last four days at the Jesse Lou Camp. I got thirty-eight birds and a porcupine skin. Miller and I are hard at work upon them. The doctor is laid up with snow blindness again. We had a feast at Jesse Lou on porcupine, boiled, roasted and stewed. It is like veal and fine eating. An Indian shot it. Many people are traveling on the river, so as to get as far as the Mission before the ice breaks up. Scurvy is on the increase. Two more men have died of it at Ambler City. Four at the Iowa cabins are down with it. None of us are in the least affected. Brownie is cook now and we have plenty to eat. Miller and I have begun trading some of our bird skins for personal supplies for next winter at Dutch Harbor. We traded a pair of ptarmigan for a sack of flour and fourteen pounds of bacon to-day. We can get almost anything we ask in trade for bird skins, but money is scarce. After tramping all day have just had a magnificent dinner. Here, as elsewhere, something to eat is the first need. The doctor and I have had fine success. Got twenty-three rock ptarmigan. But we are tired and the poor doctor is attacked again. He is at this moment applying a solution of boracic acid to his eyes. I continue unaffected. We are sunburned as dark as natives. For a while I burnt-corked my face, but no need of it now. I wear a broad-brimmed, black slouch hat, drawn close over my eyes, and find it better than snow-glasses.

April 15.—Twenty degrees below zero. The Indians say that in the last thirteen years there were three summers when the ice never melted out of Kotzebue Sound at all. And they say this is just like those years, no snow until late. When the snow comes early it prevents the water and the ground from freezing so deep. Men are beginning to worry about our condition. The ice in the river is seven feet thick, and there isn't snow enough to float out all the ice when it melts, so they say. Last winter there were seven or eight feet of snow, and now only two or three feet. It does look dreary for those who are in a hurry to get out.

I was out to-day on snowshoes. I like them. One acquires a long, sliding gait that is very easy. On the ridge back of the Guardian Camp I had a fine view of the country north and west. The snow is drifted over the west side of the ridges by the east winds, forming great shelving banks with protruding crests twenty to forty feet above their bases. We are getting almost enough

sunshine to start a thaw. Miller has gone to Ambler City in the interests of our new "firm." He will look after the jays in that vicinity.

I had almost forgotten to record the latest excitement. The "Flying Dutchman" arrived Thursday from St. Michaels. He has a dog team and is hurrying on up the river, expecting to return to Cape Nome before the thaw comes. The news he brought is of a "big strike" at Cape Nome on the coast near Sledge Island. "Richer than Klondike." Three men took out $600 in ten hours." There may be some truth in it, as this is about the place Van Dyke was to take us to. But I am hard to convert to any gold proposition now. I shall have to see it to fully believe it. All are excited over this rumor, but it is useless to think of travel. We got a letter from the "Penelope" crew stating that Harry Reynolds and Jett had already started for the new gold fields. They took grub and a team of dogs, so our company will be represented at Cape Nome. I am afraid to think there is something in it. It excites one unduly after the disappointments of a year. The "Flying Dutchman" says flour is ten dollars a sack at Cape Nome and other things to eat as high. We heard that C. C. and party had reached the Kotzebue camp after a hard pull. Rivers and Clyde gave out and had to be hauled to camp. Several were snow blind. They had hired two Eskimos to draw the sled to the schooner. Such is life in the Arctics.

Nome excitement is spreading and many are starting overland with light loads for the new diggings. Our neighbors of the Iowa cabin are getting ready and eight will start to-morrow. None of us here feel called upon to attempt the trip.

We have received news through other channels than the one mentioned in regard to the Cape Nome district. It looks more hopeful. Captain Ingraham, who was up the Kowak last fall, is on the grounds, and has staked several claims. He took $158 out of three prospect pans. Hundreds of men are rushing into the country. There are fights over claims and two men are shot. Miller returned from Ambler City Monday with eight ptarmigan. We have put up the skins in fine shape.

Looking Northward.

April 19, Wednesday, 9 p. m.—Two men came in from Ambler City to-day with frozen feet. We rubbed the frost pretty well out with snow, but they will be laid up for a month and one of them may lose his toes. The nights are cold, fifteen to twenty degrees below zero. By noon it is thawing. A man's socks and boots become soaked with perspiration and, as the afternoon advances, the temperature falls and the wet footgear freezes. Then, too, in many places the river ice cracks and the water flows up through and soaks into the snow so that a traveler steps through into the slush and water deep enough to fill his shoes. Before camp is reached the feet freeze. The Cape

April 22, Saturday.—It is snowing heavily this morning, with a strong north gale. The doctor went down to the Hanson Camp yesterday, expecting to return to-day, but he hasn't arrived yet. I feel anxious about him, it is so easy to get lost. This cold will put a stop for a while to the Cape Nome procession. Men have been passing down the river every day, and we have lots of visitors for meals and to stay all night. John Miller, the man with the frozen feet, is still with us and probably will be, for he has no other place to go. His feet are in bad shape; great blisters run across them, and he suffers. Dr. Gleaves is back from his trip to the Agnes Boyd Camp, and is about starting for Cape Nome. It is very interesting and amusing to those who stay at home to note the efforts and trials of the poor peo-

ple toiling along the trail. Most of them start out with two or three hundred pounds apiece, but they lighten their load each day until it is reduced to one hundred and fifty pounds. I am convinced myself, from what the Eskimos tell us, that it is useless to start for Cape Nome now. It will thaw before half the distance is covered. By the route generally traveled it is about four hundred miles from here. Yesterday a snowflake came hopping about the woodpile on the sunny side of the cabin — the first arrival from the South. It spends the winter as far south as the northern tier of the United States, where it is the familiar snowbird.

A man up the river sent down the left hind foot of a "snowshoe rabbit" to be stuffed. He had the tendons pulled apart so that by pulling on them the toes were moved. He wants the foot preserved in some way so that this mechanism will remain and the toes move by pulling an invisible string. Don't know as I can do it.

April 25.—We finished putting up our ptarmigan yesterday and have more on hand now. The past few days are warm, with southeast winds. I started out this morning but found the snow too sticky and soft. It clings to the snowshoes like lead weights. It is uncomfortably warm.

We think the main part of the Cape Nome rush has passed us. Several went by this forenoon from as far up as the Riley Camp. Saturday night at ten o'clock two fellows got in from Ambler City. The boys had all retired but Miller and me, so we got them their supper. They had come thirty miles that day, pulling a sled, and were nearly ready to drop from exhaustion, when they got inside. Sunday at 2 p. m. eight more arrived. They came staggering into the cabin, groping their way to the nearest seat, almost dead. Nearly all were snow blind to a more or less extent. One fellow's eyes were paining him so that he sobbed and cried like a child. The crowd spent the night. Saturday night it had snowed ten inches. Unless we get a hard freeze to make a crust I doubt if these men can reach the Mission even.

We have to entertain so many visitors that it is getting tiresome naturally. I judge we have fed sixty men in the past week, or at least have served that many meals. We call our camp the "Penelope Inn," or "Cape Nome Recuperating Station." John Miller is getting well rapidly and can stand on his feet to-day. They are sloughing. Several men we know are down with the mumps. We have all been exposed.

April 29, Saturday.—An Indian arrived with letters from the schooner "Penelope." C. C.'s party arrived all right. C. C.'s letter confirms the Cape Nome report, and he and Cox, Fancher, Alec and Driggs are to start in a couple of days from date. If they reach there all right, it will make seven of us on the ground. That left only the captain, with Rivers and Clyde, on the schooner, so C. C. suggested that Miller and Brown from this camp make all possible haste to get there, that they may assist at the breaking up of the ice.

It didn't take the two boys long to decide, and yesterday they spent in remodeling an old sled and making up as light an outfit as possible. They left at four o'clock this morning with a one hundred and fifty pound sled load, and, if the weather continues cold enough to keep the present crust on the snow, they ought to make the trip in twelve days. That leaves only Uncle Jimmy, Dr. Coffin and myself to take care of the stuff at this camp. If anything should happen to the "Helen" above, we should have some experience in raft building and getting down the river as best we could. It is lonesome, only three out of the original twenty, and after having had so many neighbors, too, who are mostly gone. The latest word from further up was that our boys are at work on the "Helen" digging her out of the ice, and she is so far all right. The "Agnes E. Boyd," which was buried in a glacier creek during the winter, stands little chance of being saved. So also with the "Hero." The firm of "Miller & Grinnell" have disassociated on account of Miller's "summons," but if the Cape Nome prospect fails, as I think very likely, we will join again as soon as we meet and prepare to spend the winter at Dutch Harbor. Miller will collect birds down in the Sound this spring. With Miller and Rivers at work there, and myself here, I ought to get a good collection by spring. Dr. Coffin does a good deal of shooting. Out of every five birds he brings in in good condition, I skin one for him. That rate is favorable for us both. He already has a box full and by spring will have quite a collection. I am getting a good deal of freight on my hands. It is bulky. I keep the neighborhood gleaned of empty boxes of all sorts. I am very short of cotton, either for wrap-

ping or stuffing. I use dry hay and moss for even the smaller birds now.

Last week the doctor and I took a long tramp, staying out all night. When we started we had no idea of being away twenty-four hours and only had a light lunch, consisting of a little corned beef, four half slices of bread and butter, a dozen walnuts, a handful of raisins, and some malted milk tablets. And this was all we had for four meals. The doctor says it is good for a person's health for him to fast occasionally, and I am certain that this opportunity ought to fully demonstrate the assertion. But I do not think my health demands any further treatment of the same nature. We kept going farther from home, hunting for likely places for ptarmigan and other birds, until we got pretty tired; so we thought it a good time to try the experiment of sleeping out on the snow with no protection whatever. I do not say we were lost. Gold-hunters are never lost.

We lived through the experiment. We did not sleep more than half an hour all the time put together. We had to keep "flopping" over to keep one side from freezing and the other from roasting. We built a fire against a spruce in a dense patch of woods. The snow was beaten down in front of it, and a mass of spruce boughs gathered and formed into a real comfortable-looking nest. This kept us from contact with the snow, but allowed of a too free circulation of fresh air. A number of decayed trees in the vicinity afforded fuel for the fire with little trouble on our part, our hunting knives being the only tool we had carried with us. Once during the night I had dozed off very reluctantly when the doctor happened to notice the smell of burning wool. A spark of fire had snapped out and lighted on the front of my jumper, where, in less time than it takes to write it, it had eaten through my clothes, including my sateen shirt and undershirt, and was progressing towards my vitals when the doctor rang up the fire department. I was awakened by a sudden application of cold on my diaphragm and the loud tones of my companion, who declared he did not come to the Arctics to be burnt to death. In spite of the sleepless night we enjoyed everything. We started again at three o'clock in the morning, after a breakfast consisting of two walnuts apiece, a dozen milk tablets and a few raisins. The doctor wanted to roast some of the birds we had shot the day before, but I would sooner starve than spoil such rare things as Alaskan three-toed woodpeckers, hawk owls, Alaskan jays, and whitewinged crossbills. I should think anyone would. On a hillside where the snow had been nearly all blown off and the sun had thawed the rest, we found a large bare place. The mosses and lichens looked just as fresh and green as if it were midsummer, and, growing close on the ground, were lots of last year's berries, all the more sweet and juicy for their eight months' cold storage. The ptarmigan were on hand, too, and I shot two old roosters. The male ptarmigan are changing now, and specimens shot show some beautiful mixtures of the bright brown summer plumage and the snow-white winter plumage. The willow ptarmigan are all in pairs, and, though mostly shy, may be located by the loud cackling of the males. A very good crust on the snow makes snowshoeing a delight for a few hours, but, like any walking, it grows tiresome. One's feet get worn and blistered where the foot-straps work. If the snow is damp it balls on the center lacing and a blister is raised before one knows it.

CHAPTER XX.

MAY 6, Saturday, 8 p. m.—This is the strangest May weather I have ever experienced. The wind has blown a gale from the north without a moment's cessation for four days. It is twenty-five degrees below the freezing point. I was in the vicinity of the Hanson Camp yesterday, but got no birds. I saw only one pair of chickadees and one redpoll. They were never so scarce all winter as now. The natives assure me that a change is due shortly, and then there will be "emik apazh," and the "ting emeruk" will come.

The Hanson boys came near getting me into serious trouble yesterday. It was one of Joe Jury's jokes. When I left his cabin I started back into the woods. Nolan, of the Sunnyside, called in. Joe told him that I had reported seeing two caribou across the river on the way down. Joe garnished the tale with a few extra details, and Nolan left for Sunnyside pretty well excited. He got nearly everyone in camp out before noon. I happened along on their trail about four o'clock, and the first fellow I met was Nolan, just returning from a long tramp. He informed me that he had seen the caribou tracks (?) and wanted to know where I had last seen the animals. I was taken by surprise and told him that I hadn't seen a

caribou in Alaska. It then dawned on Nolan that he had been the victim of a joke, and he was somewhat "beside himself." I tried to explain matters by telling him that I had said to Joe Jury something about having seen "ptarmigan," which no doubt he had taken for "caribou." The rest of the fellows took the joke all right, but said they would "get even" with Joe some way. One man fired his rifle at a target and split the barrel over two-thirds its length, owing to snow in the end, I suppose. The gun was ruined and so the joke was a costly one.

There is a string telephone between two cabins at Sunnyside which is a real novelty. The box resonators in each cabin are fixed up with features like a human face with a tin mouth. It was exceedingly funny to see the expression on the faces of the natives when they first heard that box "talk." Greenberg was talking in at the other end, and they recognized his voice. One old woman fled in terror. She thought it was a "doonak" (evil spirit). It is no wonder these things frighten the Eskimos so. Doubtless our own ancestors would have been burned at the stake by their townspeople for witchcraft in the early days of New England had they dared to make a tin box "talk."

I bought eighteen pounds of No. 8 shot for $1.20 at the Hanson Camp. It took me nearly three hours to bring it three miles against the wind. I had no snowshoes, as I had let Brownie have mine when he started for the schooner. The extra weight was just enough to make me break through the crust every five steps, and down I went to my knees. That eighteen pounds grew to one hundred pounds before I reached home.

John Miller, the cripple, has moved over to one of the Iowa cabins, so we are alone for the first time in many weeks. Only three of us. We cannot use all the game we shoot now, and I am rather glad to have the opportunity of giving it to the hungry natives. I do not waste a bird body. I give some of them to Charley for his mickaninies, and he loans me his snowshoes whenever I want them for hunting. At first the boys dubbed me "the bird fiend," but they have quit that now. Too many scurvy victims have blessed me for the ptarmigan which, in some cases, have been all the fresh meat obtainable, not to mention our own possible suffering had it not been for the birds I shot. And now I do not object at all to the wordless thanks of these poor natives, who devour every scrap of a bird of any sort, excepting the skin, which only I claim. I save souls, bird skins being the only visible or invisible soul of which the creatures are possessed.

We have just learned of a superstition which is the most cruel of any noted among these strange people. It has roused our civilized horror. A very pretty little girl about thirteen years old, who has been the pet of the camps all winter, and whom the boys have looked upon as a "little sister," has been shut up all by herself in a small snow cave back in the woods. There she is doomed to stay until the snow melts, without speaking to anyone or leaving her cramped position, with no fire and with only such cold food as may be brought to her. And she must live alone in such an igloo for one year, so their statutes decree. This is the law concerning all Kowak-mitt women when they are supposed to have reached marriageable age.

This is but the beginning of the little woman's punishments, which will be many and varied from this date.

The "cabloonas" around this vicinity are very much incensed over this new superstitious cruelty. To demonstrate our convictions in the matter, eight of us armed ourselves with guns, marched over to the village and demanded that old Omechuck and his wife, Atungena, Kalhak's parents, take the child back into their igloo. The man laid all the blame on the mother and grandmother (as it was in the beginning), and we had a big wrangle. We informed them that if they did not end this and other cruelties, and liberate the girl by to-morrow noon, we would come over in a great body and tear down the cave and take her away. They were pretty well frightened. It gave us lots of fun, though we didn't change our austere countenances. We meant what we said. Uncle Jimmy headed the expedition. He had a great big knife belted on, and we all presented a dangerous front. What if the Eskimos had taken it seriously and mobbed us? Mobbing is not their tendency. They are gentle in spite of other things, and were actually in fear of our threats. We are not sure of the full extent of our influence, but we stirred them up and they may conclude that this "missionary association" of gold-hunters is not here for nothing. Later the girl was released.

May 14, Sunday.—Spring is breaking the winter's reign at last. The snow has almost disappeared from the sand-dunes and

is softening everywhere. Little pools of water are appearing in the low places. A gentle rain is falling, the first since last September — eight months. The days of slush and water are upon us, but oh, such exciting days for me! The first geese and gulls have arrived, very shy and very few, and I saw two swans. They stay about the muddy places across the river. I got a fairly good shot at a goose, but missed it. Everyone is after the poor geese and lots of rifle balls are wasted, with never a goose as yet. I shot a solitary glaucus-winged gull sitting on the ice, with a thirty-calibre Winchester rifle at 143 yards range. The bullet went straight through the neck, cutting a very clean way, and the skin made a beautiful specimen. Yesterday was my red-letter day. I found, almost by accident, a jay's nest and eggs, the thing I have been looking for so constantly for three months. I also found a fine set of hawk owls — six eggs, three newly-hatched young and both parents. The nest was in a hole in a rotten spruce stub about twelve feet above the snow. When I tapped on the tree the male, which was sitting, left the nest and flew away about a hundred feet, turned and made for my head as straight and swift as an arrow, planting himself full force, and drawing blood from three claw marks in my scalp. My hat was knocked about twelve feet and the crown torn out. All this the owl did without stopping in its swoop. I recovered myself just in time to receive a second charge and had to dodge clear to the ground. When the courageous defender of home and country turned for its third attack a charge of No. 10 met it, and it died an honorable death, deserving to be ranked among heroes. I have the entire set preserved.

I have a flock of white-winged crossbills spotted in a spruce forest ten miles away, which I expect will nest in a couple of weeks, but I doubt if I can reach the place, now the snow is going. I wore snowshoes nest-hunting yesterday, but probably for the last time this year. It is far easier snowshoeing over the snowy tundras than walking through the peat and water and "nigger heads" after the snow is gone.

May 21, Sunday.—Uncle Jimmy and Dr. Coffin still keep up the Sunday services. Three of the Iowa men and half a dozen Eskimos have come in. As I have just finished a bird I thought it a good idea to desist until after church, on Uncle Jimmy's account. So, until singing begins, I will have a little time to write. I cannot afford to waste a second these days. Most of the snow is gone. All the ponds and sloughs are full of water and the river has risen fully eight feet.

All the slush ice has gone, but the thick winter ice is on top and extends unbroken down the middle of the river. The Eskimos say that if the warm weather and high water continue this ice will break up and

The Prisoner We Rescued.

float away very soon. And then it would be "finis" to bird collecting, for the steamers would whistle and we would all have to pack up and start. I am just living in dread of the "Helen." I would not cry should she spring a leak or otherwise disable herself, so that she would be laid up until the last of June. This is a wicked thought and I repent of it. Solitary sandpipers and Baird's sandpipers are here, and I know they will nest by the middle of June. Small birds are beginning to arrive. I heard the beautiful song of the fox sparrow for the first time this morning, also the tree sparrows and varied thrush. I saw a single robin yesterday with its familiar call note. We have goose dinners galore, but the geese are lean and tough, far from such eating as they were in the fall. We prefer duck and ptarmigan. The doctor has made some very nice cranberry jelly from the berries which have been

stored on the vines under the snow all winter. The native women and children picked over two gallons yesterday, which they brought to us.

May 24.—The Kowak is breaking up and it is a tremendous sight. The water has risen until it is on a level with the bank on this side, and on the opposite side it is spreading out over the tundras. It is covered completely from side to side with a crunching, grinding mass of ice from three to five feet thick. Yesterday there was a jam on a sand-bar below and the ice course was stopped. Then that from above came down

The Kowak Breaking Up.

with force, crushing and piling into great ridges of blue and green blocks from ten to fifteen feet in height. There must be a tremendous momentum in a moving field of ice. In one place a field many yards in diameter was forced up a steep bank until it toppled over on itself. The banks are plowed by the resistless stream and trees are broken off like threads.

Indian Charley borrowed our kyak, which belongs to Rivers, three days ago to go up and look after a birch canoe which he wanted to carry out of reach of the ice. He was only going as far as the Guardian Camp, and there was plenty of water along the edges there. He was expected back the same day, but has not returned yet. We fear he has lost his life. His father, an old, withered man, who smoked himself last winter when Charley was sick, walks the river bank all day watching, and yesterday afternoon cried and howled a long time, mourning "Kayuruk" who, he said, was surely "mucky" (dead). I saw a birch canoe yesterday crushed and lying on a passing cake of ice.

If this was Charley's he must have met with misfortune. One would think that a native, who has experienced many such occurrences, would know enough to keep out of harm's way. Night before last a couple of the Iowa boys spent two or three hours tramping through the swamp looking for ducks which they kept hearing. But they were not able to catch sight of the authors of the numerous "quacks," which always lured them to greater distance. To-day, after telling everyone of the strange birds, the boys are being "joshed" in true camp fashion. The bullfrogs are appearing in every pond and to-day one has begun his warble in a pool a few feet from the door. We did not expect to see frogs so far north. I fail to see how they resemble the quacking of ducks, but some imagine the sound to be the same. The first mosquitoes are abroad, just a few, a sort of "foretaste," according to Scripture. The birds are arriving in large numbers, like a stampede, and the woods are full of the songs of robins, thrushes, sparrows and warblers. I am working hard, too.

May 31.—Oh, but spring is lovely! I am sure I never spent three such happy weeks, and I have been happy all my life. Yet I have been working hard, some days until I was tired enough to drop. Last week I went up to the mountains and was gone forty-three hours, with only about one hour's sleep. We tramped fifteen miles across the tundra with heavy rubber boots on, sinking into the moss and among the "nigger heads" every step. And then through streams, and snow, and tangles of brush. The second day it rained heavily and we started home at 7 p. m., tramping until midnight, when we reached a point where we had left our boat in a slough about two miles below on the opposite side of the Kowak. While we had been gone the river had fallen and the heavy boat was high and dry. We had to drag it through a narrow channel over mud and grass a hundred yards to the river. And then there was a stiff east wind and a swift current to cross the river against, and we finally had to tow up to the landing. There were four of us, including Dr. Coffin, who has been my companion in many of these bird hunts, so soon, alas! to be over. I was so tired when I got in that

I fell asleep half undressed and without supper. But I obtained what I went for, and it was worth the hardships — white-winged crossbill's nests. Young, an Iowa man who was with us, fell to his chest in a narrow stream of ice water, and we were all soaked from the rain and dripping underbrush.

The river is entirely free of ice now and people are starting down. Many are passing every day, but they will be unable to go farther than the delta, for the Sound doesn't clear earlier than July 1.

We have heard that the "Helen" is all right and is expected down in a day or two. She may get stuck on a sand-bar. If so I shall have a week longer for the birds. We have been packing all day. I have a good deal of stuff in bulk, though not heavy. I wouldn't blame the boys if they "kicked." We may have to make two trips from here down. We learned that our barge, which we left last fall on the bank of the Squirrel River eighty miles below us, was burned last winter, so our carrying capacity is limited. The steamer "Riley" has been repaired. She came up as far as the Hanson Camp yesterday. Indian Charley has turned up all safe. He has been down to a village below, gambling for another wife.

According to the Eskimos I am to die before the snow is all melted off, because I robbed that jay's nest. Grass is springing up, and last night, while I was strolling through the woods, I found a patch of crocuses. The woods were beautiful, the long, deep shadows contrasting with the yellow sunlight. The silence was intense, and yet there were many sounds—the quavering song of the thrush, breaking out and then dying back; the chorus of frogs from a distant pond, and the occasional demoniacal laugh of a loon. Yet it was silence broken in pieces. The scene from the sand-dunes north across the river was most beautiful. I wish I were able to depict the scene as I perceived it and the indescribable sensations it awakened. I wonder if I were the same age as Uncle Jimmy if I would be impressed the same way. It is something for me to remember all my life, this wonderful winter on the mighty Kowak. And I must bid it "Good-by."

We had a regular thunder storm to-day, with a heavy shower which set the roof to leaking, in spite of the tents stretched over it. Dr. Coffin has inaugurated a new decoration. It denotes rank of vice-president of the L. B. A. M. & T. Co. A double row of safety pins up his shirt front. There are only three of this illustrious company at present in the "Penelope" cabin, but all the more need of distinctive decorations.

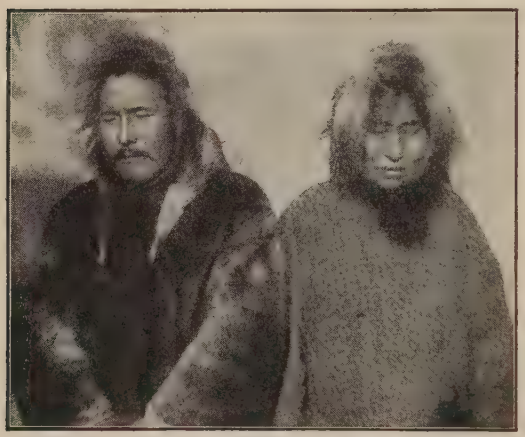
B., the partially demented individual who might have died of scurvy last winter if we hadn't drawn up his "will" for him, is the source of amusement to us, with his various tricks. He spends most of his time on the river bank watching for passing boats. He hails everyone with a mixed set of questions; first, "Have you any white lead for sale?" second, "Did you have the scurvy?" third, "Where'd you come from?" etc., until the boat is out of hearing. B. has a skiff he is very proud of, and he threatens anyone who touches it. I am on very good terms with him and he tells me whenever he sees a goose on the river (usually it is a loon). He makes a noise in his throat like a chicken disturbed after it has gone to roost. I do not know what will become of him. He is perfectly harmless.

This evening I traded three pounds of raisins for a sailor bag. I have more clothes now than when I left San Francisco, enough to last me five years. Dr. Coffin is a real convert. He is himself a "bird fiend" now, after starting that nickname for me in the beginning. He thinks of stopping this summer at Dutch Harbor. If it keeps on I shall have the whole crew. I think we shall pull out from the company entirely and so escape the turmoil of the ultimate disbandment. There is little hope of realizing from the trip, even on the "Penelope." She cost us enough in the first place, but who knows where she is now?

I just now thought I heard the whistle of the "Helen." There is nothing in sight. That "Helen" haunts me. She it is who will bear me away from this fascinating region. By the way, she has a fine whistle. A better one than any other boat on the river. Perhaps we can trade that whistle for something, even if nobody will accept the gift of the boat and engines. Oh, I forgot; there's Cape Nome. The boys there may have staked out rich claims for us by this time. However, I would be willing to trade all my stock in the L. B. A. M. & T. Co. for some plaster-of-paris, cotton batting and some arsenic.

June 6.—My last date on the Kowak. The "Helen" arrived on the evening of the 2d. She is O. K. and the eight boys well. They brought down with them a man who is afflicted with black-leg, too helpless to leave.

We shall take him to the Mission, so we are now quite a large family. Nearly everyone above has already passed down the river in all sorts of boats and rafts. We have persuaded the rest to remain here a few days, as it will be impossible to get into the Sound so early. We are having a little more time for game. I have taken several sets of rare eggs, and have a number of nests "spotted." But the boys are getting restless and I fear we will have to pull out to-morrow or next day. We are living "high." A varied assortment was served



Some Friends We Left Behind.

up in the fricassee yesterday — ten old-squaws (ducks), a curlew, two ptarmigan, one loon and a blackbird. Indian Charley brought us twenty fish, so we have plenty of fresh meat, a welcome change of diet for the boys of the upper winter camp, as they have not been afflicted with a bird fiend in their crowd.

The steamer "Agnes Boyd" was saved from the ice, but is now high and dry on a sand-bar and the river is still falling. The Hanson boys are having a peck of trouble and the prospects are now that they will not get out until the August rains come. I was out collecting until one a. m. night before last, and the pink sunlight never left the mountain peaks. The trees are nearly full foliaged to a beautiful fresh green, and several varieties of flowers are in bloom. It is too bad to be compelled to leave here just at this season. I certainly can never regret leaving a place or home so much. But such is life. We hesitate moving always. And yet who knows but there may be better prospects further on? It is with something of a lump in my throat and heart that I turn my back on what has been the scene of such wonderful experiences to me. Still I must say it, "Good-by, old Kowak, good-by!" Good-by, mice, little redbacks; good-by, sand-dunes and tundras, winter, spruces, birches, cabin, all. Good-by, Eskimos, funny people, who have a kind heart in a little, brown, superstitious body. Here's the deserted village for missionary souls, houses, woodpiles, pictures yet pinned on the walls, echoes of Sunday services and literary societies — and voices of gold hunters.

CHAPTER XXI.

JUNE 12.—We are steaming down one of the numerous channels of the Kowak delta, and I am sitting on the upper deck of the "Helen." The channel is narrow but deep and very tortuous. Half an hour ago we were going in an exactly opposite direction. The banks are low and are lined continuously with willows whose branches have not even budded out, although up the river we left the trees in full foliage, thus indicating the season to be much later along the coast than in the interior. We have met no ice in the stream, but there is plenty stranded on the bars. Some Indians told us to-day there will be plenty of ice in the inlet for many sleeps yet, but our boys want to see for themselves. I think it a great mistake to have left the timber so early. We left our winter home on the 8th of June and traveled three days. Yesterday we tied up all day at the last timber and I put in the time collecting. I obtained eight sets of eggs, a little brown crane skin put up, greasy as a duck, besides several small birds. I put in every minute on shore and am getting some good things, —sets of varied thrush, gray-cheeked thrush, etc.

We got a good deal of game yesterday. Everything that has meat on it goes into the pot. The fricassee to-day consisted of a crane, two ducks and a loon, all cut up and boiled together. Jesse Farrar is cook; Stevenson is fireman; Casey, engineer; Wilson and Foote, pilots; Shafer, Shaul, Uncle Jimmy and I, deck hands; the doctor and Colclough comprise the fire department.

And this last is a very important organization. Sparks from the smoke stacks catch on sacks or anything inflammable and soon start a smudge. The fire department immediately "smell smoke," and extinguish the conflagration with a teacup of water. The usual seat of combustion is Casey's jumper. Then the back of the boiler gets almost red hot and several planks get to scorching, and even some of the cargo is in danger. With its other duties the department has put in ventilators, so we have less trouble. The crowd is in very good spirits. The quartette is frequently heard, and just before bedtime Foote gets out his banjo.

This morning we passed a camp of natives. Six of their kyaks came out and followed us a long way. They could sail circles around the scow. They are very dextrous with their funny craft. Just before leaving us they sang in chorus "There'll Be a Hot Time." Evidences of the great Kotzebue rush will be found among the Eskimos, in their language as well as in other ways, for many years to come.

A cold west wind from off the sea ice blows constantly, and the weather is not to be compared with what we left at "home." My sorrow at leaving the cabin does not lessen. The "Helen" is loaded very heavily, but we managed to get everything on. We have great times keeping her on an even keel. The order, "Everyone go aft," or, "Everyone go forward," is frequently heard. She only stuck on a bar once coming down, and then there wasn't much trouble in getting her off. That is one thing in which our steamer excels many others. It is difficult to make her run aground hard enough to stick. She doesn't move fast enough. The wheel has been enlarged, but it makes little difference in her speed; the engines are not large enough. Stevenson keeps from 150 to 175 pounds of steam in her boiler, which is really more than ought to be carried for safety. It is getting cold up here on deck, and I am going down to the boiler-room to warm up.

June 18.—This is Sunday and Uncle Jimmy thinks I ought to do something besides skin birds all day, so probably the most righteous act would be to write in my mother's diary. It is a very disagreeable day. It has snowed heavily all day, melting as fast as it falls and sticking to everything. We have the big 12 x 20 tent up among the spruces, and the cooking range keeps the interior quite pleasant.

The crowd has been in the tent all day singing and reading, while I have one end of the long table for "the morgue." The Iowa party is camped near us, and their launch "Iowa" takes trips every other day to the inlet ten miles down the river, to see the state of the ice. Shaul went down with her yesterday, but they report the ice packed firmly in the inlet and as far as they could see towards Kotzebue Sound. We are camped in the timber at the mouth of the Kowak. A couple of warm days last week brought a foretaste of the mosquito scourge which we expect, but they do not promise to bother me much. Dr. Coffin is so kind to me. He hunts birds' eggs and gives me more than my share. Even Uncle Jimmy hunts nests in the woods, having located five for me in the last two days. Some of the good things we have taken are the little brown cranes, black-throated loon, Hudsonian curlew and scaup duck. We were out over the tundra all day yesterday and did not get back until this morning. I remembered that it was my little brother's birthday (the one who is so fond of insects), and I managed to catch two butterflies with my hat for him. I saw several, but they were pretty active, and it is hard running over the mossy hummocks and bogs after them. I shot a crane yesterday and the doctor got one a few days before. They are fine eating, better than any birds except ptarmigan. We have two seines, and Casey, Shafer and Foote comprise the fishery department. Dr. Coffin and I keep the camp in game, so we have plenty of fresh meat. We got three dozen duck eggs one day, and now Shafer makes fine cookies and doughnuts. I blow all the fresh eggs, and the contents are therefore all ready for "scrambles" or baking.

We are a jolly crowd and no one would believe us to be disappointed gold-hunters. The main occupation of this branch of the L. B. A. M. & T. Co. at present is bird-nesting. I hope we have to stay here two weeks yet. Day and night are all the same to us nowadays. I seldom get to bed before one a. m., and am up for breakfast at eight. The snow is beginning to stay this evening and the landscape is whitening. This is such weather as the old Arctic explorers met with all summer when they suffered so much from exposure, but a warm, dry tent like ours, with plenty of wood, keeps us comfortable and very far from martyrs to the "cause." The winds are very chilly, and I really suffered more from cold last night as

we were sailing up the river to camp than I did all last winter. It is hard to keep one's feet dry. If I wear hip boots I am sure to step into some hole in a swamp and get them full. One time I went in to my waist by surprise when I was wading in the edge of a pond after a grebe's nest. For an instant I was deprived of speech, which was a great hardship. The ice is getting "rotten" rapidly, with the heavy winds breaking it up.

Kowak Delta, Sunday, June 25.—I am sitting on a heap of spruce boughs before an open fire in the woods. There is a heavy wind blowing and the tents and steamer at the river bank are altogether too airy. This is a much more sheltered and comfortable spot. We have been at this camp two weeks, but will probably pull out to-morrow and go down to the mouth of the river, and, as soon as the weather is favorable, go across the dreaded Holtham Inlet and on to the Mission. The launch "Iowa" reports the ice breaking up at the river mouth and moving out. For a while there was quite a large community of tents along the river each side of ours, but they have all started down now. The "Agnes Boyd" passed us, having been laid up on a bar several days. She brought the sad news of the death of Jack Messing, one of the San Jose crew of the Hanson Camp. He was found dead in his bed on the steamer. Five other men were sleeping with him, but noticed nothing unnatural until they attempted to arouse him for breakfast. Jack was a sociable, good-hearted fellow, and many were the pleasant visits exchanged between him and members of our camp last winter. It is reported that an Indian shot two white men over on the Selawik this spring. As the natives tell the story, the Indian was entirely justified. They forced him to mend a sled at the muzzle of a revolver, and scared him so that he finally tried to run away. They picked up rifles and started after him. But he got behind a tree with his own rifle and anticipated them to the number of one man. Many men are still crippled with the scurvy. On the Pick River fifty-two men out of sixty were down with black-leg. The schooner "Life" wintered near Selawik Lake with nine men aboard. Missionary Samms received word by the Eskimos that these men were sick with the scurvy and were helpless. So he set out to their aid. He returned a few days ago, reporting that five out of the nine had died and the other four were recovering. It is an awful disease, and many more have perished from that cause than from disaster or accident. It is strange that our company has escaped so far all such mishaps, but we are not out of danger yet.

Steamer on the River.

As we see them, the general run of people are impatient to get home, are cross and quarrelsome. Many are the "scraps" and differences among companies. It is a common thing to hear men cursing each other bitterly over such trivialities as loading a boat or setting up a tent. Sometimes partners will divide their supplies, even breaking a spoon or knife in two to "make it even." I am glad to say that our crowd is remarkably free from such things. The usual sounds are of singing and joviality. The doctor and I have frequent friendly word fights over such topics as, "Which way the wind blows to bring rain," whether a "light object floats down stream as fast as a heavy one;" or, "how close to the wind we can sail the boat." But if there is one of us assailed on any point by anyone else we both agree at once, and bring consterna-

tion to the ranks of the enemy. Someone made the statement the other day that a razor becomes sharper if left for a while unused, and every man except the doctor and myself was of the same mind. Think of such a tradition in this enlightened age! Several maintained that for that reason they kept two razors, using them alternate weeks. When we especially feel the need of mental exercise, the doctor and I argue on physical and mental evolution, and on this subject the other boys let us alone for good reasons.

Last night the doctor, Casey and I went hunting, and did not return before 2 a. m. this morning. We started about four and went up a slough until we came to open tundra. It began storming about eight and blew and rained heavily all night. We had agreed to be back to the skiff by nine, and Casey and I were on hand before that time, but the doctor did not appear. In spite of our oil coats we were soon wet and shivering. After waiting a while and hearing no shooting which might announce the doctor's approach, we set out and walked to where he was last seen by us at the edge of a lake, but could discover no sign. We began to be alarmed and, returning to the slough, spent a couple of the most miserable hours. We managed to start a fire at the foot of a solitary scrub spruce and were speculating gloomily as to what might have happened, when we heard a distant shot. The doctor came wearily tramping across the tundra, and was more happy than we to get back to the boat. He had become mixed up among some sloughs and lakes. He had followed around a large lake several miles, only to find progress stopped by a slough joining that lake with another. He then retraced his steps to his first starting point and began over again. His boots were full of water and he was of course drenched, for he had left his oil coat at the boat. When we got home we were glad to find Shafer up and a warm tent. He got us a hot supper and to-day we are none the worse. The doctor got an old goose with her four downy young. I found a set of pin-tail's eggs and shot some ducks and a ptarmigan.

The tundra is curiously marked off in many places by ridges and ditches running at right angles to one another. The ditches are full of water, and the tundra resembles a California alfalfa field laid off in squares by irrigating ditches. I cannot think of a cause for this formation. The numerous lakes and ponds are many of them higher than the surrounding land, and are hemmed in by dykes three or four feet high. These are thrown up by the floes of ice in the lakes which, decreasing in size as the summer advances, are driven back and forth across the lakes by changing winds, and thus crowd up the mud and sod around the edges. The dryer parts of the tundra are covered with the white reindeer moss, really a lichen, and under and among this a thick mat of sphagnum and other mosses. This is soaked full of water, and it is like walking over a bed of sponges, where one "sloshes" in five or six inches at every step, to travel over such ground. Then on lower ground a sort of bunch grass grows in big, stout tussocks, "nigger heads," with water and loose moss between. This last is the worst walking.

CHAPTER XXII.

MISSION INLET, Cape Blossom, July 1, 1899.—We came across Holtham Inlet in good order Tuesday. That was the only day so far that any steamers have come through. The weather was fine for us and a broad channel was open and clear of ice as far as the Mission. The same evening a west wind arose and the ice has been shifting back and forth across the inlet ever since. The "Riley," "Agnes Boyd," "Delight," "Mattie Farington," "Nugget," and "Iowa" came through the same day, and all are here in the little harbor safe from the ice floes. The sea ice stretches unbrokenly from a couple of miles below the Mission across to the north side of the Sound, and no one has been able to get in or out of the Sound except a couple of natives, who crossed from Point Hope on a sled. They report the ice as firm as winter, with no prospect of its breaking up, and say that it will be "twenty sleeps" before we can expect to get through, and "maybe the ice won't break up at all." The beach from here to the Mission is lined with tents and presents quite an animated scene. Everyone expects to go to Cape Nome as early as possible. We have no word from our good ship "Penelope" later than May 3, and she was all right then. She wintered seventy miles below Cape Blossom. The weather is very cold and disagreeable. Heavy winds bring penetrating fogs from off the ice, with storms of rain and sleet, and we have had a heavy snowstorm. We have our two 10 x 20 tents up, end to end, on the gravel bar separating the "goose pond" from the Sound, and have very comfortable quarters. In one

tent is the cook stove and dining-table, and the other is a sort of parlor with the big heater in use. We loaded up heavily with wood before leaving timber on the Kowak, but I think we shall have to make another trip for wood before long. Everything in the line of driftwood is cleaned up in this vicinity, but there will be the usual annual crop when the ice breaks up.

I just now heard a gull squalling and ran out with my gun in time to get a shot at a Pomarine jager which was in pursuit of it. I got the jager all right and it is a fine bird, the first I have obtained of this species. The long-tailed and parasitic jagers are quite common. I found a nest of each on the Kowak delta. Yesterday I found four sets of the eggs of the northern phalarope, and shot three golden plover, which are the first I have taken. Collecting now is very uncomfortable. I wear the same heavy mittens, July 1, which I wore all winter, and in fact heavier clothing all through than was worn at thirty degrees below zero. Our warm parlor tent is quite an attraction and we have plenty of company as usual with us. We are talking about mail. No news from the outside world since September 15 of last year.

July 15.—Somewhere in Bering Sea off the Alaskan Coast.—I am sitting on the coal-box in the galley on board the "Penelope." I am a fixture between the fire-box of the cooking range and the window, and have to flatten myself against the wall to keep from burning my clothes. There are four "galley slaves" in this 6 x 8 coop, but this is absolutely the only place possible to write in. The sea is smooth, with a light breeze, which is ahead. Foggy as usual and very chilly. The galley is the only place except in bed where one can warm up, and it is in pretty lively demand whenever the cook does not claim full possession. There are twenty-four men aboard, but all have gone to bed save the captain and three men on watch. The captain has scarcely slept a wink since we started a week ago. The strong currents, unfavorable winds, and thick weather are retarding us unexpectedly.

We were watching on the Sound on July 3 when two schooners were sighted through the ice off Cape Blossom. On the 4th five of us went out in a small boat and were delighted to find one of them to be the "Penelope," all safe and in good time. Captain Delano and the four boys, Miller, Clyde, Brown and Rivers, must have had a very rough experience, being on duty twenty-four hours at a time. The ice in Escholtz Bay, where the schooner wintered, began breaking up and moving out on June 15, and from that date until she anchored off Cape Blossom, the "Penelope" and her little crew were at the mercy of the ice floes. They had very narrow escapes from being pinched between floes or crowded aground. Once they were forced on a bar and only got the ship out of her danger by breaking the ice up around her and "kedging" out. At one place their stint of open water was narrowing, as the ice pack drifted toward shore, and something had to be done immediately or they were lost. A strong off-shore wind was blowing, and the captain set all sail and headed straight for the ice. When the "Penelope" met it with full force she raised herself up, sliding gracefully on to the floe, and then her weight broke it down. Then she plowed through the ice until she reached a strip of open water beyond, where she was safe for the time being. And with all her battlings the "Penelope" came through with scarcely more than a skin scratch on her sides. Before the ice broke up the captain had repaired her, painting her white with blue trimmings, and renovating her from deck to hold. Six vessels wintered near her and their captains all agree that it was little less than a miracle that any were saved. Two, the "Ainsworth" and one other, were wrecked by the ice. The "General McPherson" and "Penelope" had about the best anchorage for the winter, in a cove behind the Chain Peninsular.

July 5 and 6 were stormy and nothing could be done but straighten out accounts with various parties at the Mission. Many who left earlier in the Cape Nome rush, borrowed or bought provisions from the stores on the "Penelope," and left orders for us to collect from their representatives when we should get down in July. They thus saved the labor of hauling their stuff on the first part of their trip, as the "Penelope" was a hundred miles on the way. We have heard nothing of our Cape Nome contingent. On July 7 we had fine, calm weather, and loaded the "Penelope," making two trips out to where she was anchored, nine miles from the Mission off Cape Blossom. These two trips were our last with the "Helen." We also took on six passengers and their freight to Cape Nome, besides two sailors who worked their passage. It was decided that the poor "Helen" must be left, and, in case we should not return for her this sum-

mer, Missionary Samms could have her. She never could stand a sea, and if we took her machinery back to San Francisco it would not be worth much more than old iron. There goes $1,800! Be this her epitaph: "She served her purpose, if she was slow."

We set sail southeast from Cape Blossom on the 8th and anchored off Chamisso Island on the 9th for water. It was too rough to load the water tanks until night, and we had until midnight on the island. I was delighted—fairly wild! There are big rookeries of murres, puffins and gulls on a detached islet, and a party of us made landing and collected forty dozen eggs. I went over the cliffs on a rope and was hauled up and down their faces. There was little danger except from falling rocks which might be loosened above me, and we were always very careful about that. I had a good crew, with Dr. Coffin as foreman. The murres lay their eggs on little projections or narrow shelves of rocks on the face of the cliff, in most places entirely inaccessible save from above. At the last descent I had one scare. Whether the boys above me had an equal scare I will leave them to say. I was about fifty feet below the edge of a precipice and probably the same distance above the rocks in the surf. I had obtained everything within reach and had yelled to "hoist away," but got no response. I was too far down to hear the voices of those above, neither could they hear me. The rope didn't budge and I continued swaying in uncertainty in mid-air, rather dubious as to the result. Finally I gave a successful "yank" on the rope, and was then jerked upward at a great rate of speed, scraping my elbows and shins in my frantic efforts against being thumped against the sharp projecting rocks. When I rose over the edge I found six men on the rope. Three were usually sufficient, but this last trip the three could not start the rope, and not until the sixth man, Casey, took hold, did it give an inch. We found that the rope had caught in a narrow chink in the rocks. Had it required one more man to start me, where would he have been found? I probably should have been left to swing for many hours. But I wasn't. Nothing happened wherewith to satisfy the adventure-loving and "narrow escape" craving modern journal, and I haven't all the eggs blown yet. Either I have been seasick or on duty. Besides, popular sentiment is against me. The boys don't like the idea of eating the egg after it is blown by my pipe from the shell. In vain I assure them that the blow-pipe is thoroughly disinfected according to the latest advices of science. They insist upon seeing the shells cracked open, lest there might lurk some hidden secret within known only to Shafer and myself. This new lack of faith on the part of the hitherto "nice boys" is very disastrous to scientific investigation. I think they might trust me, for I eat at the same table and get away with my share of doughnuts and cookies. I leave it to Shafer if I don't. Dr. Coffin and Rivers have taken the egg craze, so between us three I hope a good series will be saved out of the lot.

On Chamisso Island we saw records carved on logs in a fair state of preservation of the visit of "H. B. M. S. Blossom, 1826,"

Iceberg.

"H. B. M. S. Herald, 1848," and some Russian vessel 1837. Those were some of the old Arctic explorers.

At 2 a. m. July 10, the "Penelope" set sail westward out of Kotzebue Sound, and after dodging through scattering ice and close along the south shore, sometimes in thirteen feet of water, she got safely out into the open beyond Cape Espinberg. We, with one other, were the first boats out this year. The ice opened first this season on just the opposite side of the Sound to that of last year. We had a good gale in the Arctic and another in Bering Sea just after getting through the Straits. It was fearfully rough and how the "Penelope" did pitch and roll! Worse than any time in the Pacific last year. I was seasick and so was almost everyone.

I belong to the Sailors' Union this year. Brownie is assistant cook, as I was last year. We sailors are divided into watches of four hours each, three men in each watch, giving one hour and twenty minutes at the wheel to each man. I, with Clyde and

Rivers, am on from 12 to 4. Eight hours a day on deck and sixteen off, doesn't read like hard work, but it's plenty.

We have had only the worst weather. Until we got through the Straits we encountered frequent squalls of snow and sleet. To-day it has been rainy and foggy. It is difficult to keep one's hands and feet warm during the hour and twenty minutes at the wheel, even with our best clothing on. I could not report for duty during the gales. We have seen several vessels, and last night spoke the whaling tender "Bonanza." Her captain yelled at us that there is "A big strike at Cape Nome!" I am inclined to think that the whole world is making fun at the expense of these "fool gold-hunters," as we are called. I wish I were at Dutch Harbor collecting birds. Later, 11:30.—A breeze has sprung up favorably and the captain says we are within fifty miles of Cape Nome.

Off Cape Nome.

Cape Nome, July 20.—Got in all safe and anchored close off shore. Boys have located seven claims not yet developed. Plenty of gold in sight. Hurrah for the Arctic gold-hunters of the "Penelope" crew!

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPE NOME, July 26.—After an eleven days' voyage from Kotzebue Sound we anchored off Anvil City on the morning of the 20th. Those eleven days make a nightmare. A succession of head gales with dense fogs. We were almost within sight of our destination when a southeaster began to hum through the rigging and a thick fog set in. The "Penelope" hove to and for two days we experienced a most disagreeable combination of rolling and pitching, with their inevitable conditions. When the clouds finally lifted we were back in Bering Straits. The northward current is remarkably strong at this season and it is almost impossible to stem it unless there is a fair wind, which in our case did finally favor us. We found our Cape Nome representatives all here save Cox, who was left with some claims toward Fish River. All are well, but from their account they must have had some sorry experiences. Dr. Gleaves, Gale and party were lost in the overland trip and ran out of provisions, resorting to their seventeen dogs for food in the last pinch. They finally reached supplies with barely enough meat for two days longer. Close shave. The body of Dr. De France of the "Iowa" party, was found frozen in the trail in the mountains.

On the 22d the "Penelope" sailed up the coast to our claims, which are located on the beach seven miles west of Anvil City. Here we have unloaded supplies and will proceed to work the claims far enough to see what they are good for. I have not visited "town" yet, but there must be two thousand inhabitants living mostly in tents or driftwood shacks. Several warehouses have been built and two substantial frame buildings are going up. They say there are ten thousand men in this district, mostly scattered out among the hills. Five thousand claims are recorded, but of these only about a dozen are known to be of value. Four are so far being worked, but these I know to be extremely rich, for anyone can look on and see the "shining" as it is separated from the gravel in the sluice boxes. Shafer and Stevenson were at these workings a day or two ago and saw two shovelfuls taken up indiscriminately pan out one $6 and the

other $8. These rich claims are in little cañons or ravines seven miles back from the coast in the hills. This is really a gold bearing region, for one can find colors almost anywhere. We can get from twenty-five to two hundred colors to a pan on our claims here, but they are very fine, and I doubt their being saved in sluice boxes. The beach claims contain plenty of gold, but it will require improved machinery to make them pay.

I have left my bird skins and everything except a single change of clothing on the "Penelope," as we all have done. But I am afraid my collection is liable to damage from rats or mould. There is no place on shore to put the stuff and no through vessels that I know of to ship it by. The "Penelope" left night before last to take a prospecting party thirty miles down the coast to examine some country there and then to visit the claims where Cox was left. Nine of us are left here, with Harry Reynolds as foreman. We are at present digging holes in various places to see if we can find the "pay streak." No success yet. The gold on the beach is not "wash" gold, but no doubt comes from the bluff which borders the beach about one hundred feet back from the surf. From this bluff the smooth tundra extends back some five miles to the hills. Anvil City is at the mouth of Snake River, which extends back through the hills and heads in the high mountain ranges which we can just see through the gap. Anvil Creek, Snow Gulch and Glacier Creek, the rich spots, are tributaries of Snake River. To the westward is Penny River, but this whole country, including thirty miles along the water front, is all staked out. The district is under military control, and twenty soldiers are stationed at Anvil City. Without them there might be trouble. It seems that the first men to this region, the so-called "discoverers," staked out as many as one hundred claims each under power of attorney. They then formed a mining district and passed a law that powers of attorney cannot hold, thus handicapping those who have come in since, so one man can take up but one claim. The other night a miners' meeting was called in town to consider the matter. A resolution was brought up which, if carried, would throw the whole district open to be restaked. The lieutenant was there and he knew that if this passed there would be serious trouble. He informed the meeting that if this resolution was brought up he would clear the house. After some deliberation the resolution was couched in a different form, disguising its intent, but the officer kept his word and ordered the house cleared. There was some hesitation and several toughs even looked resistance, but the order was given to fix bayonets. The meeting was thus broken up and nothing more has been done.

Main Street, Anvil City.

The original staking was doubtless unfair, but if the district were now reopened it would be worse. There is little lawlessness in Anvil City, on account of the militia. A good many claims have been jumped and some of them two or three times. This will give work to the lawyers. Several of our own claims have been jumped, but we are on them now and possession is nine points of the law.

July 30.—This is Sunday and a day of rest for us. We have worked pretty hard the past week. In fact this is the first mining the L. B. A. M. & T. Co. has done. Prospect holes have been dug in different parts of the claims. Uncle Jimmy and I were set to dig-

ging a hole back on the tundra, and if anyone doubts the work is hard let him try it for himself. We worked three days and got to a depth of ten feet with no favorable results. The tundra is thawed barely through its covering of moss, seldom more than six inches. The rest of the way the frozen ground was as hard as rock and had to be chipped off bit by bit. The hole was about four by five feet, just room enough to wield a heavy pick. We broke the points off the pick every day. A strata of pure ice a foot thick was encountered, but most of the way we worked through a sort of frozen muck or packed mass of unrotted vegetation which, when it thaws, looks and smells like barnyard filth.

After the first day the walls began to melt and cave in little by little, so that each morning and noon we would have to bale out a foot or more of mud and water. It was about as dirty work as one can imagine. The fresh clods, as we picked them out of the bottom, were so cold that for a time frost formed on the outside just like a cold piece of iron brought into a warm room in winter. Although as cold as a refrigerator down in the pit, the perspiration poured off from us from the stifling air. Only one of us at a time could work in the hole, so we had half hour shifts, Uncle Jimmy and I. The man on the outside had to haul up the bucketfuls of dirt and water, but he otherwise rested. After our long yachting trip this work was especially hard. But such labor gives one a tremendous appetite. Jesse Farrar is cook now. Shafer has deserted the company. He has obtained a position in a restaurant uptown at $150 per month and expenses, with prospects of $200 next month. C. C. Reynolds, Dr. Coffin, Clyde, Baldwin and Colcough have left on the steamer "Albion" for home. Yes, for home! All have made satisfactory arrangements with the company. As to the rest of us who "stay by the ship," there are none but could better his condition by leaving the company. But we who have a good deal of money invested, hate to leave everything when affairs are looking better than ever before.

We are in a gold country here and none can tell what may turn up. I never saw a single color in the Kowak region, but here the sand is sprinkled with them, though not in paying quantities everywhere. I must admit that even I, who do not know what homesickness is, would like very well to be at home for a while. I am losing time now. No matter if I were shoveling gravel and digging holes, that isn't improving myself any, is it?

I am still intent upon Dutch Harbor as soon as the company leaves Alaska. I do not suppose I will ever return to Alaska again, and I think a few months among the Aleutians would be time well put in, in the natural history line.

By the way, "Uncle S.," the Quaker gold-hunter whom we had given up for lost last winter, came aboard the "Penelope" when we first anchored at Anvil City. He has bought a small steam launch and makes money ferrying people and their goods up and down the coast. The Snake River is not navigable except after heavy rains. I have also seen the "Flying Dutchman" here. He is gray. He had black hair and beard last fall. His forced journeyings over the frozen Arctic have left a witness to his hardships. The "Bear" came in last night from Kotzebue Sound, bringing eighty victims of scurvy. The sickness up there has been awful this spring and the death rate as high as ten per cent.

We hear of a great many disasters. There are but few who would spend another winter on the Kowak for a mint of gold, unless it be myself. To crown it all, we have news of a strike on the Kowak! "Nuggets as big as hickory nuts!" This story, when we are scarcely four hundred miles away from there! Somebody is starting another boom. This may start some more "fools" up there. But it will take something new to get any of us back. We have bit at "the hickory nut" once, and I do not think we shall again. We hear that the transportation companies are booming this country. It is overrun now and there is sure to be crowding. Wages are five to eight dollars a day back at the mines, but only a limited number of men can get employment at that. Expenses are high, and a man had better stick to $1.50 per day back in civilization than to come here and sleep on the damp ground in a tent without a fire and live on salt-horse and beans.

The hot weather is upon us at last and the last four days have been "sweaters." It is like an oven in the tent where I am writing. Dr. Coffin got us each a box of lemons and oranges on the "Alaska," just in, before he left. Jesse just brought in a big stew kettle full of ice-cold lemonade. Two bowls full just serve to make one want more. It tastes so good. We have had one mess of fresh potatoes and onions. We ate the latter raw with vinegar. It does a fellow good to be without such things a while, if not too

long. He knows better how to appreciate them.

And now I record a fact that ought to make every face blush that turns an upward glance at Old Glory. The United States has passed "a law," permitting saloons in Cape Nome. The natives get all they want and are killing each other when drunk. The native girl who mends some of our shoes, came in drunk, and when sober she was asked where she obtained the liquor. She gave the name of the man. Our foreman told him that he would report him to the captain of our squad, and was offered $50 by the criminal to "keep mum."

Aug. 5.—It is nothing now but "work" from 7 a. m. to 6 p. m. After ten hours of it one is more ready to rest than to write. I do not get a minute to so much as look at a bird except Sunday, which we have voted to observe. And then there is plenty to fill in every minute when one comes along, including mending and washing. But I can scarcely help seeing the birds that fly past along the beach just as if to taunt me. Bands of Pacific kittiwakes pass up and down the surf on the lookout for herrings, and an occasional glaucus, or rather the Port Barrow gull, comes sailing along. A pair of Arctic terns feeding their full-grown young, afford almost the only bird notes of any kind. The young have a pleading, and yet harshly strong, succession of calls, and hover along the beach ever ready for the fish caught in the surf by the parent birds. The precision with which the terns can drop on a tiny fish or crustacean in the boiling surf is remarkable. And yet they seem so light on the wing and rise from the water with so little apparent exertion. Long-tailed jagers are common, coursing back and forth over the tundra or poising against the wind with fluttering wings much like a sparrow-hawk. Their long, pointed, streamer-like, central tail feathers distinguish them at almost any distance from the other jagers. They feed on meadow mice and caterpillars mostly, but their habit of forcing gulls to disgorge is of frequent notice. As there are no mud flats or marshes here the waders are scarce. I saw a godwit, probably the Pacific, flying back toward the interior. Several golden plover, which I have no doubt are rearing their young, are always on the back part of our claims. Their melodious, warbling call reminds me strongly of the robin. These plover show decided preference for the dryest tundra and uplands, and at Cape Blossom I found them on the hillsides in the interior of the peninsula. One day last week while I was at work in a prospect hole back of the bluff, three turnstones lit in the mossy hummocks within a few yards of me. They were very tame and remained an hour or more near me, feeding on insects or their larvæ. I have never taken this species (the common turnstone), although I saw it at Cape Prince of Wales and Cape Blossom, and tried hard to get some specimens. I took several of the black turnstones in Sitka in 1896, and also in San Clemente Island last year. Black-throated loons are numerous and are constantly seen and heard overhead as they fly back and forth from the lakes on the tundra to their feeding grounds out at sea. This is the only loon I have seen here, though I saw the red-throated at Kotzebue. I have kept special watch for the yellow-billed loon which is ascribed to this region, but have never identified it. The Eskimos make clothing of loon skins, and I have particularly examined such evidences, but have never found a scrap of yellow-billed loon skin. This species cannot therefore be very numerous. Land birds are very scarce here, probably on account of the awful barrenness of the region. I flushed one snowy owl back of camp one day, and the boys say they saw a hawk of some kind yesterday, I think from their description a gyrfalcon. I saw two juvenile Lapland longspurs yesterday feeding about the bluff, and also heard a yellow wagtail. I have noted a pair of juvenile redpolls several times along the bluff.

This, I think, comprises our avifauna up to date, and it will be seen that a collector would have rather "slim picking." They tell me that back in the hills where the ravines are lined with willow scrubs, birds are more numerous and that large flocks of juvenile ptarmigan are appearing. I would like to go back and see if this is true, but it is all "business" now. The financial prospects of our party are brightening every day. Our beach claims may become a paying proposition when properly developed. Eight or ten of us are working on one of them in a very crude fashion, using "rockers," and are taking out $50 to $60 per day. With improved machinery this would be a rich thing, but of course considerable capital would be required to start. I am "cleaner-up;" taking out the previous day's clean-up, which consists of several pans of mixed black sand and gold dust (the latter in smallest proportion), and panning it down so far as I can

without losing any colors or fine flakes of the yellow. Then I mix in mercury thoroughly, which takes up all the dust, forming an amalgum, which is finally separated and retorted, leaving the buttons of pure gold. We are figuring on another proposition and may not continue at this much longer. We have prospected these claims enough to know their value, and this is enough for this year. There is a good deal of trouble about the strip of beach between high and low tide, some claiming it to be public reserve and open to be worked by anyone. Several "squatters" are working on our claims who refuse to get off, but the judge will settle this next week.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAPE NOME, Alaska, Aug. 6, 1899.—It is Sunday evening again and I am reclining against my roll of blankets in the warm tent. Foote is playing the banjo, beautiful music, too! I never appreciated music until this trip. Foote's marches and familiar songs, associated as they are with the freedom of camp life and that feeling of rest after a day's work, have impressed their memory as the sweetest music I ever heard. We are still on our beach claims; that is, part of us. The "Penelope" is back at anchor, having left Jett and Wilson on the scent of something under guidance of an Indian. Cox has not reported. Our property is advancing in value and so is the stock of the L. B. A. M. & T. Co. The same stock which I was ready to trade a few weeks ago for some cotton batting, arsenic and plaster-of-paris! We own a lot in Anvil City 200 x 300 feet. The beach claims are proving better. If we can hold clear to the water line we are safe. The past week we have taken out $250 in gold dust. Trouble with jumpers continues. Over six hundred men are working with rockers on the beach in sight. Some are making from $60 to $150 per day. One fellow struck a pocket and took out $400 at one clean-up. Our claims are not as good as those nearer Snake River. Several jumpers are at work on them now and we cannot put them off except by force, and that means fight. None of us want to be disfigured after our successful encounter with the frost last winter. We appealed to the lieutenant in charge, but he says he can do nothing until the arrival of the district judge next week. Several of our boys have gone up to one of the rich gulches to consider a new proposition. Maybe we will get a good lay. A "lay" is a lease given by a claim owner to a party to work a claim for a certain percentage of the outcome.

Aug. 13.—Another week has passed away and very quickly, too, in spite of the hard work. From six to twelve of us are still working on one of the beach claims. Up to Friday night we had taken out $750 in dust. If the whole company were working at the same rate this would be good wages, but there are twenty to share with. The "Penelope" has gone down the coast again to look after the prospectors and may bring good news. Jesse Farrar, the cook, went to town last night, and I have been cooking today. We were troubled quite a little at first by our numerous Kotzebue friends dropping in for meals on their way up and down the beach. So we put up a sign, "Meals, $1," more to rid ourselves of the extra care than to go into the restaurant business. Really it became unbearable.

The town is booming. The beach claim trouble is not settled yet, and everyone is working where he pleases. Claim owners up in the gulches are looking for men at $10 per day and board, and cannot get them. A $310 nugget was taken from a sluice box the other day, and one man cleared $20,000 for four days' work. Our boys have been up to see, and I ought to go. A fellow hasn't a chance every day in his life to see such a lot of gold in the rough, at its birth as it were, before it is washed or dressed or alloyed. Most of the lucky ones are Swedes or Laplanders, they being on the ground at the beginning of the rush last spring.

Gold can only bring $15 per ounce at the highest, and only $14 at some stores. In other words, coin is at a big premium. The beach gold runs very high, being much purer than that from the hills. Some was sent to St. Michaels and assayed $18.40 per ounce. If one had the cash he could buy up the raw gold and sell it. That is where the companies make the bulk of their money. It is a great temptation for some of our party to desert and start into private enterprises. But I, and most of the boys, will stay together and I believe will come out better in the long run.

They say Dawson is played out and that this is the next place for a boom. But I wouldn't advise anyone to come here if they have any way of making a living at home. Ten dollars a day sounds big, but when one pays $90 each way for transportation and ten prices for things here, there isn't much

left from the short period of three months' work, and one is not sure of that.

We have a short fish net set out beyond the surf. This morning I found four salmon in it, the first we have had since leaving Kotzebue. Only four of us are here to-day, but I had three "boarders." Three dollars in "dust" was good.

I have forgotten to describe what "rocking" is. A rocker runs just like a baby's cradle, from side to side. At the top is a hopper with holes in the bottom to keep out the coarse stuff. The sand falls through the hopper-holes and washes over two "aprons" slanting back and forth to the bottom, where it runs out through a sluice-box. The aprons, and sometimes the sluice-box, have "riffles," or strips of cloth fastened in crosswise, to catch the gold. The aprons and the whole bottom of the box and riffles are of blanket, so that the finer dust catches in the nap or wool. A man stands dipping water into the hopper with one hand and rocking with the other, while the other man puts in a shovelful of the pay dirt every now and then, and keeps the water tub full and the tailings cleaned away. Two men run a rocker, though when the "Penelope" crew is ashore there are three men to each of our four rockers. We have to carry all our water from the surf. Some of the rockers have copper plates amalgamated with mercury on the upper sides. These are better, as the finer particles are caught and amalgamated. To "clean up" a rocker, the aprons and blankets are taken out and washed in a tub and the resulting débris panned out. I am amalgamator, and have nothing to do with the rockers. I pan out the previous day's clean-up and amalgamate the dust, squeeze "dry" the amalgam and weigh it. We have no retort as yet and I have on hand nearly ten pounds of dry amalgam. I have experimented with it and find that the amalgam is one-half gold by weight. Oh, the boys have a little joke on me. It was the result of my first experiment and I shall never hear the last of it. There must have been something else in the spoon I was using, nickel or silver, for the gold melted right into the spoon. I poured the stuff out on to a shovel-blade to save what was left. What did it do but melt right into and all over the shovel! The result of this is that the L. B. A. M. & T. Co. has a gold-plated shovel. We are a wealthy company and can afford it.

Later. Anvil City, Cape Nome.—I came to town after supper and am writing in our "city cabin," which is just back of the A. C. Company's store. We own a very fine residence in the city 12 x 16 feet, on a 150 x 300 foot lot. It is a good eight miles from our beach claims here, and as I walked it I thought it twenty. I wore heavy shoes, and the best walking I could select was on the wet sand along the surf. For the entire

Tenting on Cape Nome.

eight miles there is scarcely one hundred feet without one or more tents on it. The beach is riddled with ditches and holes, and hundreds of rockers of all descriptions gyrate in various rhythm. I spoke to many Kotzebue people whom we knew last winter, and all are doing well. The beach is still being worked by everyone, irrespective of original locators, a dozen or more on our own claims. The officer arrested several, but discharged them again. The townspeople, saloonkeepers and transportation companies are against claim owners, as it is to their own interest to keep the mob taking out money. And they're doing it, too. Anvil City is booming. Dozens of frame buildings are being erected. Three big two-story sheet-iron buildings are going up, which comprise the government barracks. Several steamers have gotten over the bar and are in the mouth of Snake River. About two dozen saloons are raking in the money. This is a speedy place. I wish I had my time for the next two months here. Ptarmigan are $1 each for eating. Wages are $1 per hour.

Cape Nome, Aug. 22.—I am quite sure that I do not aspire to the realm of cookery, but yet, for all that, I am in the kitchen again, "monarch of all I survey." I do not blame the cook for stubbornly declaring his intention to resign and refusing to leave his bed. No one heeded his warning given the day before. Pandemonium ensued. A dishpan of mush finally appeared at the hands of Uncle Jimmy. No one consented to fill the vacancy at any wages. Three "boarders" came in and were turned away. The dissolution of the company was imminent, all because there was no one in the crowd to perform a duty which is considered by all to be the most disagreeable of any on the list. I told them so, and several other emphatic truths. "Practice what you preach!" was hurled at me. Then I rose up like a martyr and declared that I would "risk death" in the interests of the L. B. A. M & T. Co., and here I am in imminent peril of being wiped off the face of the earth by some "beach comber" whom I charge fifty cents for a loaf of bread. I sold three loaves at that rate yesterday. Also served fifteen meals to outsiders at the rate of $1 per meal. One man came in for supper last night who planked down a bag of dust worth fully $800 for me to weigh the dollar from. I poured out a little too much and he grabbed the bag and went out, saying, "Keep the change!" Most of the money taken in is dust. Cash is scarcer than ever. Copper plates are not obtainable, and silver dollars and halves are at a premium for covering the bottoms of rockers. The coins are amalgamated with mercury to catch the fine gold dust. I saw fifty arranged in rows in one rocker. Our claims are now covered with beach jumpers and we cannot get them off. Mob law rules. There are one hundred beach combers to one claim owner, and the authorities will not or cannot do anything. The lieutenant in charge gave us some notices to "vacate," but the people pay no attention. It fell to me to go up to one of our claims, and I showed the notice to each of the workers along the beach. Some laughed at me. Some sneered. One "tough" consigned me and the notice to a warmer place than Cape Nome in August. He continued to swear at me, and when I respectfully asked him to "be reasonable and give me a hearing," he told me to get to that same place I have mentioned "and quick, too." This at my own claim! I never knew I had a temper before, but for a minute then I do not think I would have been responsible. I can easily see how murders are committed in the rage of anger, and if all judges and juries could put themselves in the place of the tempted, perhaps capital punishment, at least for such crimes, would be annulled. The man who threatened me was bigger than I, and I went on. And he is still working there, taking out $100 per day, so I am told. He is in a "pocket." Our pocket. We have discussed the advisability of using force, but have abandoned it. Fancher says we "might get disfigured," for there are people here just awkward enough to hit a fellow in the face.

Rocking Out Gold at Cape Nome.

We are hemmed in on all sides and soon

our beach claims will be worthless. Sunday I retorted all the amalgam we had on hand, and eighty-five ounces of pure gold was the result. Seven pounds of the pretty yellow stuff! I broke the big chunks as they came from the retort into small pieces with a cold chisel. It was fascinating work to weigh out the rare metal and lift the same when it was put into the chamois-skin sack. I have turned it over to Treasurer Rivers, so it is off my hands. But what is fifteen hundred dollars divided among twenty men? It would certainly be better to divide up the company right now, for the individuals here, but we cannot lawfully do it. Complete desertion is the only alternative to staying with it.

Anvil City, Aug. 24.—We have left the beach claims and are on our way to Nome River. We have leased a fifty per cent. lay on Buster Creek, and are going to see what is in it. It is our last chance for this year. It may turn out poor, but we have very good reports from that section. We hope to feel assured of something good to come back to next spring. Ice last night, and probably an early winter. The schooner is going up to Safety Harbor in Port Clarence to remain until October 1st, which is about as late as we dare stay here. I must go ashore now for a boat-load of lumber for sluice-boxes.

Later.—The rats got into a box of my geese and entirely ruined them. I do not know how much else is destroyed. I have not been so absolutely down-hearted for many moons. All on account of those miserable rats. I came near taking all my collection ashore and quitting the company. But then I suppose "gold is to be desired above all things," at least this is what I am told by wiser heads than mine, judging by their whiteness and baldness. There is a prospect of getting some new potatoes ashore to-night, and these will be an all-sufficient antidote to low spirits. Somehow potatoes, and even onions, go straight to the seat of low spirits when a fellow has been without them a year or two. Strange to me that a man ever commits suicide in the midst of local markets where fresh vegetables can be obtained. Ah, we shall have a great supper to-night! One menu three times a day — beans, dessicated vegetables, rice, dried fruit and bacon — grows wearisome unless the appetite is awfully sharp.

Buster Creek, Sept. 3.—Here we are twelve miles up among the mountains back of Cape Nome. It took two days towing up Nome River, which is really nothing more than a creek. There were bars to drag the boat over every hundred yards. That brought us to the mouth of Buster Creek, three miles from here, and from there we had the sweet job of packing up all our supplies and lumber on our backs. Rain most of the time and nothing but green willow brush to burn. It was very disagreeable, hard work, but here we are now, well settled, with an oil stove to depend on when the willow wood fails. We have a fairly good looking claim here, No. 4. Have it opened up and the first gravel through yesterday. The riffles show coarse gold, though in no fabulous amount. We cannot get much out before freeze-up this year, but ought to do fairly well next summer from present prospects. Some ice

Placer Mining, Cape Nome.

and considerable frost already. We will probably return to the coast the last of September, The "Penelope" rode out the late storm safely when so many other vessels were lost. My latest news is that the rats have taken my goose box for a nesting den. One of the boys will watch from this on. I am cooking and it keeps me jumping sideways to feed the fourteen hungry gravel-heavers. I have to be up at five in the morning and am seldom through until nine at night. Have to bake every day, and have nothing larger than a single camp stove oven to do it in. Everyone is working for all there is in him. We hope to strike a pay streak, as they have on the claim above us, rich enough to take out $800 per day. I have scarcely time to breathe outside of the cook tent these days. But I frequently hear the notes of familiar birds—golden-crowned sparrows, gray-cheeked thrushes and ptarmigan. I shot nine ptarmigan the other evening close by. We are feasting on fresh venison. Yesterday morning a reindeer appeared on the hillside above the tents. Without malice aforethought one of the boys aimed and it fell—to our lot. It is now hinted that the wild creature was a tame reindeer, and that the Laps from over on Anvil Creek who have the animals in charge, will most likely come to hunt it up. If they get a peep into our provision tent we may have to pay $100, otherwise it will be finished by us with a relish such as few can appreciate. These Laplanders own very rich claims and, though they are really a lower class of people than the Indians, the latter cannot become citizens.

Last week, while we were coming up along Nome River, birds were quite numerous, especially the smaller species in the willow thickets. I saw or heard the yellow, black-poll and Wilson's warblers; tree, fox, golden-crowned and intermediate sparrows, gray-cheeked thrush, redpoll, snowy owl, flocks of golden plover and pectoral sandpipers, one young Sabine's gull on a sandbar; lots of large gulls, either glaucus or glaucus-winged, and perhaps both; loons, black and red-throated; little brown crane, pin-tails, and other ducks not identified. The last two or three days small birds have been very scarce. On August 27 and 28 the fall migrations were in progress. Most of the birds were heard singing, especially the warblers, as in spring. The ptarmigan are very nicely plumaged now in parti-colored costume. I wish I could save some, but the L. B A M. & T. Co. is mining now. I can hardly decide in my own mind to stay another winter here. I will let circumstances decide. There are hundreds of Dawson people here who say this will be a greater gold country than the Klondike. Some of the creeks are turning out immensely rich. One Swede came down from his claim the other day with $88,000. He got rid of $30,000 of it in a saloon almost immediately. It will be seen that the saloon people are taking in most of the gold. However, I think we are on the right track, though it may take two more years to bring us material returns. In a few days now it will be:

"Penelope! Penelope! zip! boom! bah!
Going home from Kotzebue! rah! rah! rah!"

CHAPTER XXV.

BUSTER CREEK, Cape Nome, Sept. 16, 1899.—A week ago Casey went to Anvil City, across country twelve miles, and brought a batch of mail, containing our first letters from home since our arrival here in answer to our own. I received six, which I have committed to memory, sitting alone in the cook tent. If people at home, the wide world over, would write faithfully to absent ones, there would be joy in many a wanderer's heart.

Here we are, working like beavers, thirteen of us, including me, the cook. It's the last struggle of a dying company. But it isn't dead yet. In fact there are many good signs of reviving, possibly to a more prosperous condition. We have done little so far on Buster Creek but hunt for pay dirt. Just now we are making wages. Took out $400 last week, including some very pretty nuggets. The claims are too spotted; that is, the gold runs in narrow streaks, and necessitates moving quantities of barren dirt to get at it. Our largest nugget so far is $4.13, with a good many $1 ones. Over on Anvil Creek they took out a twenty-seven ounce one last week. That is a better size. While we have done little but "prospect" on the claims here, we have gained a good idea of their value, and expect to work them next year. A cold snap struck us three days ago and threatens to put a stop to our mining for this season. The creek is bordered with ice, and icicles adorn the edges of the sluice-boxes. We shall remain as long as we can possibly work. It is snowing quite heavily to-day. I saw the last Siberian yellow wagtail on the 8th, also a gray-cheeked thrush. I saw a gyrfalcon and snowy owl flying

along the cañon yesterday. Scattering flocks of golden plover have been quite common the past few days on the hillsides feeding on blueberries. I shot one near the tent this morning, although the ground was white with snow. I can hear their clear notes every few minutes while I write. They are flying past along the creek or up the hills. I wish I could save some skins. But wishes do not count with a gold-hunter when gold is in sight. Yesterday immense flocks of little brown cranes passed south overhead.

I am pretty sure this is the same species we see and hear so much of during the migrations in southern California, and not so often the sand-hill crane.

This "cooking job," which has been thrust upon me by circumstances entirely outside my control, is something terrible. I will never, never get into another scrape like it. And yet "I am in the hands of my friends." No President of these United States ever accepted his office "by the will of the people" more surely than I now occupy my office as cook for the L. B. A. M. & T. Co. But for all that, I am elected by a sweeping vote. I repeat my previous oft-made declaration that I will never be caught running for this office again. In fact I never did run for it. It ran for me. An unquestionable illustration of the office seeking the man and not the man the office. I get up at five in the morning; nearly dark now at that early hour. How cold it is! And I never was eager to get up, under any circumstances. For a week nearly every night ice forms in the tent. I have an oil stove, without which I should never be able to prepare breakfast. Green willow brush is hard to burn in the little camp stove. I have breakfast ready at 6:30, dinner at 12, and supper at 6. It keeps me "hustling" to be prompt. The office is no "snap." I am given a man to chop wood when necessary, otherwise I must do everything alone. And the dish-washing three times a day! Let who will envy me. Up to the beginning of the cold snap I made light bread, six loaves per day. But since it has been freezing in the tent at night the sponge will not rise. And there's no way to keep it warm. Fuel too dear and scarce. The camp stove oven is about ten inches square, with bake pans to fit, two loaves to a pan, one pan at a time. Light bread went a good deal further than baking-powder biscuit. It takes nine slabs of the latter a day to satisfy us now. We are reduced to the bare necessities, no butter nor canned milk. For breakfast I give them corn-meal mush, bacon, bread, beans and coffee. For dinner bacon, beans, bread, pea soup, apple sauce and coffee. For supper either bacon gravy, made of flour and water, or stew, if we have ptarmigan or meat, beans, rice, apple sauce, bread, hard-tack and tea. Our reindeer was fine, but lasted only a few days. One unaccustomed to this fare of ours may think we are in luck for miners, and so we are, but one gets tired of the same menu for so long. And then the staleness of it, after being shipped and towed and packed and unpacked, and swapped, and crushed, and dampened, for nearly two years! Little freshness in it.

The boys are having no easy job at shoveling. Their feet are swollen and sore from standing in rubber boots in ice water, and their hands are cracked and chapped. These every-day monotonies are the real hardships of a miner's life. He can tramp across the country for a few weeks and know that the end of his journey is at hand, and besides be getting some satisfaction from the thought of "glory" when he shall relate his perils to gaping friends at home. But this "peg-away" daily toil, in heat and cold and sleet and rain, after what may come to light in the next shovelful, and possibly never show up at all—this is hardship. But through it all the boys who have stuck to their work are in good spirits, and this in face of the fact that the "clean-ups" do not always show up wages even.

I have plenty of time to think nowadays all by myself, for I do not necessarily keep all my thoughts upon the grub. I do a good deal of my work from sheer habit now, or mechanically. The boys are working on Claim No. 1, and these tents are on No. 4, so I am quite alone except at meal time. A regulation claim is one-fourth of a mile long lengthwise of a creek, and one-eighth wide.

The "Penelope" is at Port Clarence, where Fancher and Jett went prospecting. The boat will be at Anvil City about October 1st, according to programme, and we will sail for home as soon after that date as we can get away. Yes, home! I am heartily tired of this kind of living. I shall be willing to take a six months' rest before taking another trip, I am sure. I long to get back to my father's house and up in those cool, high chambers of mine, where I may once more feel "like a Christian and a gentleman."

The season is earlier than usual, and the weather much more disagreeable than at the

same date last year on the Kowak. Every moment or two while I write I have to stop and stir the beans or apple sauce, or look at a batch of bread. The beans are boiling with rather a melodious gurgle, while the sizzling rice and the patter of sleet on the canvas overhead furnish a rather pleasing accompaniment. But it makes a person feel kind of lonesome-like. There! the old stove is smoking again! Whenever the wind shifts around the hill the draft is damaged, and the stinging, irritating green willow smoke fills the tent. My eyes smart and are very painful from this cause. I long for the voyage home across the water for the sake of my eyes. And now the snow is coming and it will but increase the mischief. I should hate to lose my good eyesight.

A few cases of typhoid fever are reported, but none on this creek. We are all in good health. No one would doubt this last at meal time. The boys eat an immense amount of our monotonous grub and say their "grace" as thankfully as if it were a banquet. Little Brownie, the boy who was going to work eighteen hours a day if only he could "find the nuggets," comes dragging himself home at night completely tired out, sore feet and blistered hands. The work is pretty hard on the older men, Shaul, Wilson and Uncle Jimmy. But we have no hardships from other causes than voluntary hard work. Our foreman, Harry Reynolds, knows his business well, and we all like him.

Anvil City, Sept. 20.—We were frozen out on Buster Creek, and here we are in town again. Winter is upon us, the landscape is white and the glare is very painful. The ground is frozen hard, which makes walking much easier than through a foot of mud and ooze. We are living in our cabin on our city lot just back of the A. C. Company's big warehouse. We made the entire trip from No. 4 on Buster Creek in one day, and were just in time, for next morning a snowstorm began, lasting until yesterday. We made the trip down Nome River in five hours in our boats, and then around to Anvil City outside the surf, which luckily was not heavy. And how cold it was! I was one of three to bring a boat around, and by the time we got here I was so stiff I could scarcely bend my limbs. Rubber boots and damp clothing inside. It would have been much worse had we waited a day longer. However, we are all well in spite of hardship, and are patiently (?) waiting for the "Penelope." We heard a rumor that a white schooner was wrecked a short time ago on the rocks near Port Clarence. It was thought to be the "Penelope." Alas, my dear collection! But if it were the "Penelope" we would have been informed by this time. Then we have heard that the "Penelope" has been chartered to go back up to Kotzebue again for freight, and to go over to Siberia to trade for dog-feed. But a person must make a rule to believe nothing he hears in this country or he would be worrying all the time.

This, for a boom town, beats anything we ever saw in the States. Thousands of people are now pouring in from Dawson to stay through the winter, and they say that this is a bigger place than ever Dawson was. Steamer loads of people and freight are coming in every day. The town is full of money. The town is incorporated, with mayor, councilmen and police force. Franchises have been let for electric lighting, sewerage, water works, and all modern improvements. Hundreds of houses are building, many large ones. Lumber is $150 per thousand.

I have a job for to-morrow in the mayor's office aligning a caligraph. Wages are $1 per hour. I could have all I could do for the winter, type-writing and doing mechanical drawing in the Nome City Attorney's office. But I wouldn't stay here for $300 per month. No, nor for anything. I hate the place. There's the toughest crowd of people, sporting Dawsonites, everyone ready to "do" everybody else. It is the liveliest, speediest, swiftest mining camp ever seen in Alaska. And what will it be next year? All sorts of sharks are making fortunes.

Sept. 27, 1899.—Heigh-o! The "Penelope" has just dropped anchor off Anvil City and we are in high glee. Higher glee than we ever experienced on the Kowak, for we are going home! Our hunt for gold is over. We shall take some passengers aboard for San Pedro. I shall go on ship at once and see how it fares with my precious birds. They are my gold. We shall start at high noon October 2d, and expect to make the trip in a month or six weeks. Depends upon the wind. Now for our good ship's yell:

"Penelope! Penelope! zip! boom! bah!
Going home from Kotzebue! rah! rah! rah!"

THE END.